Thompson

Biblical Lectures

TEN POPULAR ESSAYS

— ON —

General Aspects of the Sacred Scriptures

BY THE

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PREFACE.

The Lectures contained in this volume have not been prepared with the view of giving an exhaustive treatment of the topics chosen, or of entering into such scientific details as would be necessary to satisfy a specialist in Biblical matters. They consist of short essays destined to set forth in a popular manner, some of those general aspects of the Bible that appeal to all who wish to obtain a fair acquaintance with the Sacred Scriptures.

But whilst the aim of the writer has been to give a popular exposition of the topics treated, it has also been his purpose to make it truly useful and entirely trustworthy. He has, therefore, constantly consulted the best sources of information, and availed himself of what may be considered as the ascertained results of biblical scholarship.

Each Lecture is preceded by a Synopsis of its contents, so as to enable the reader to get a first acquaintance with its leading divisions and main ideas before perusing it, or to help him to secure a more distinct grasp of their bearing and connection after reading it through. As the Synopses set forth with sufficient fulness the main ideas developed in the course of the Lectures, it has not been deemed necessary to supply the volume with a special index.

Baltimore, February 25th, 1901.

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LECTURE I.

THE BIBLE AS A LITERATURE.

"The Bible is not a book, but a literature,
and indeed an infinite collection of the most varied
and the most venerable literature."—(*Edmund Burke*).

SYNOPSIS OF LECTURE I.

THE BIBLE AS A LITERATURE.

I. The Bible, a Twofold Literature:
- The Notion of a Literature, recalled.
- The Bible made up of the
  - Hebrew, or Old Testament Literature.
  - Early Christian, or New Testament Literature.

II. The Bible, an Ancient Literature:
- Its Antiquity as Compared with the other Ancient Literatures.
- Its Fragmentary Character.

III. The Bible, a Beautiful Literature:
- Almost all Literary Forms are represented in the Bible.
- Literary Excellence of these Forms, Exemplified.

IV. The Bible, an Influential Literature:
- Its Influence upon Literary Men of the Western World.
- Its Influence upon Popular Language and Conceptions.

Concluding Remarks.

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LECTURE I.

The Bible as a Literature.

> "The Bible is not a book, but a literature, and indeed an infinite collection of the most varied and the most venerable literature."—(*Edmund Burke*).

These words of one of the greatest men in the political history of the English-speaking world, describe in a terse and happy manner the subject matter of this first lecture. The Bible is not a book but a literature, and indeed of all the ancient literatures, it is the most venerable, the most beautiful and the most influential.

The notion of a literature is familiar to all. When we speak of the English literature for instance, we have in view that collection of the choice literary products of the English mind, which extends from Chaucer to Kipling, and comprises such excellent works as those of Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Addison, Defoe, Pope, Swift, Wm. Cowper, Rob. Burns, Byron, Walter Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Ruskin, Macaulay, Card. Newman and Lord Tennyson. In like manner, the American literature means for us the more restricted, yet very valuable collection of the literary

works of Henry Clay, Dan. Webster, Wendell Philips, Bancroft, Washington Irving, Prescott, J. Fenimore Cooper, Poe, Hawthorne, Holmes, Jas. Russell Lowell, Emerson, Orestes Brownson, Longfellow and Whittier. Thus then, when we speak of the Bible as a literature, we refer to the well-known fact, that like our American or our English literature, it is a collection of writings which were not composed at once or proceeded from one hand, but rather spread over a considerable period of time and are traceable to different authors of peculiar literary excellence.

And yet, looking at our Bible from this very standpoint, it were more accurate to liken it to a literature that would be made up of both the English and American literatures combined, rather than to either separately. The reason of this is that the Bible of the Christian world contains a twofold literature. It is really made up of two distinct collections of writings, which however closely connected in respect of doctrines revealed, facts recorded, customs described and even expressions used, yet correspond to two successive and unequal periods of time in the history of man. The older of these collections coincides with the many centuries during which the Jewish people enjoyed a national existence, and therefore covers a lapse of time longer than even that of the English literature. It comprises forty-five books, all written before the coming of Christ, and the collection of

which makes up the Hebrew or Old Testament literature. The other, the more recent collection, is a literature which began not long after Our Lord's ascension and was brought to a close at the end of the first century of our era, so that it is compressed within a shorter period of time than even our American literature. It contains only twenty-seven writings, and is known under the names of the Early Christian or New Testament literature.

As in respect of unity, so in respect of antiquity, the Bible differs from our American, English, and indeed from all our Western literatures. They are all modern; it goes back on the contrary, to a very distant past, and belongs to the same group of ancient literatures as those of Greece, Rome, China, Persia and India. Its second part, the New Testament, composed between the years 50 and 100 A. D., is indeed far more recent than the four last-named literatures, and is somewhat posterior to the Augustan age of the Latin language, but it is older by some ten centuries than our earliest modern literature. As regards the Old Testament, it was formerly asserted that its oldest part, our Pentateuch or first five books of the Bible, went back to a date much earlier than any other book of the world, and that only a few Egyptian papyri and Assyro-Chaldean clay tablets could lay claim to a higher antiquity. This position, which is still maintained by well-known scholars, has, however,

of late lost much of its probability. Most of the best-informed students of literature have gradually come to think that only the nucleus of the Pentateuch can be regarded as having existed in the ninth century before Christ, and that consequently even it is more recent than the oldest parts of the Zend-Avesta of Persia, and of the Rig-Veda of India, which are generally assigned to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries B. C., respectively. As the gradual composition of the other books of the Old Testament took place within the eight centuries which preceded the Christian era, it is naturally considered as contemporary with the composition of the other great literary works of Greece, China, Persia and India.

The Bible resembles these various ancient literatures in another respect. Like them it is made up of the remains of a larger literature. Of this we have abundant proofs regarding the books of the Old Testament. "They were far from being the only literature during the period of their composition, for we have fragments scattered all through the writings which have come down to us of a popular and religious poetry now irrevocably lost; while the compilers of the Hebrew annals with most painstaking accuracy give us the literary sources from which they draw their information, and refer us to books circulating in their day for a fulness of detail which they themselves have no space to give. Look in any introduction to the

Hebrew scriptures and you will find full citations of this literature. 'The book of the wars of the Lord;'[1] 'The book of the Just;'[2] 'Chronicles of the Prophet Nathan;'[3] 'Chronicles of the reign of David.'"[4] Similar evidences of a larger Hebrew literature are to be found in the references of books down to the time of the Machabees.[5] Hence we may conclude that our Old Testament contains only a remnant of the literature of the chosen people of God.

Statements tending to prove the same fragmentary character of the early Christian literature which has come down to us, are indeed much less numerous, but not altogether wanting, in the writings of the New Testament. The opening words of St. Luke's Gospel testify clearly in favor of such a view, inasmuch as we are told that "since many have taken in hand to set forth in order a narration of the things recently accomplished . . . . he also hath deemed it good to compose a similar treatise." Two passages of St. Paul point also in the same direction. In his Epistle to the Colossians (iv, 16), the Apostle distinctly refers to a letter of his to the Laodiceans, which is now no longer extant; and writing to the Corinthians, in an Epistle which bears the

[1] Numbers xxi, 14. [2] Josue x, 13; II Kings i, 18

[3] I Paralip. xxix, 29.

[4] Thomas C. Murray, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of the Psalms*, p. 52.

[5] Cfr. I Mach. xvi, 24; II Mach. ii, 24.

title of the First Epistle to their community, he speaks of an earlier letter as still possessed by them, but which has not come down to us.[1]

Thus then, the Bible stands before us an ancient and fragmentary literature, and this would naturally lead us to surmise that only few, and these rather imperfect, literary forms should be looked for in its contents. In reality, hardly any other literature, however modern and apparently complete, includes more numerous and more excellent literary forms. This would be at once patent to every reader of Holy Writ, if its various parts were printed with something of the intelligent care which is bestowed upon even our commonest editions of Shakespeare, Emerson, Irving, Bancroft, etc. Were the obvious distinction between its poetry and its prose writings preserved, were the titles of its poems and essays restored, the names of the various speakers made prominent, its best-ascertained literary forms usually pointed out, etc., any attentive reader would soon become sensible of the fact that almost all the literary forms known to us are represented in the Bible.[2] Thus would it become evident to him that rhetorical poetry is found in the book of Job; poetical essays in Ecclesiasticus, and Wisdom; epigrams, proverbs and maxims, chiefly in the book

[1] Cfr. I Cor. v, 9.

[2] The work here sketched out to make manifest to the reader the various literary forms contained in the Bible, has been carried out with considerable success, by Richard G. Moulton in *The Modern Reader's Bible*, published by Macmillan & Co.

of Proverbs; lyrical poetry, in the form of Odes, in Judges (v), Exodus (xv), in the form of sacred Hymns in the Psalms, in that of touching Elegies in the Lamentations of Jeremias, in that of dramatic poetry (though not in its absolutely strict form) in the book of Job, and perhaps in the Canticle of Canticles. Thus would he realize better than he can readily do at present, the many prose literary forms contained in the Sacred writings. He would learn, for instance, to recognize the various forms of history found therein, such as Constitutional history in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers; Ecclesiastical history in the books of Paralipomenon (Chronicles); historical Annals in the books of Kings; Epic history in Esther and the Machabees; biographical sketches especially in the Gospels, etc. Again, Dialogues, such for instance as those found in Habbacuc (I–ii, 5); literary Essays, as in Ecclesiastes; Discourses, as in Deuteronomy in the Prophetical addresses, in the book of the Acts; beautiful Idyls, as the book of Ruth; etc., would at once appear vested with their proper dress before his eyes and imagination and make him feel without effort, that in the sacred volume, literary forms are to be found, the presence of which he had either never suspected or but faintly realized. In this way too, he would be incomparably better able to appreciate the literary excellence of either the poetry or the prose of the Bible.

The following are a few selections, especially from Biblical poetry, to illustrate the peculiar excellence of some of the literary forms in Holy Writ.

A Proverb.

A word fitly spoken
Is like apples of gold
In baskets of silver.[1]

An Epigram.

A whip for the horse,
A bridle for the ass,
And a rod for the back of fools.[2]

A Sonnet.

ON THE SLUGGARD.

Go to the ant, thou sluggard,
Consider her ways, and be wise;
Which having no chief,
Overseer or ruler,
Provideth her meat in the summer,
And gathereth her food in the harvest.

How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?
When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?

—"Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep."
—So shall thy poverty come, as a robber,
And thy want as an armed man.[3]

[1] Prov. xxv, 11. [2] Prov. xxvi, 3.
[3] Prov. vi, 6–11.

It should be noticed that the strict form of the sonnet, as a short poem of fourteen lines, disposed in the very complex order which is described in our manuals of Rhetoric, does not exist in Biblical literature.

Descriptive Poetry.

THE WAR HORSE.[1]

The description of the horse is taken at the moment immediately preceding the onset.

Dost thou give strength to the horse?
Dost thou clothe his neck with trembling?
Dost thou make him leap like the locust?
The glory of his snorting is terrible.
He paweth in the valley and rejoiceth in his strength,
He goeth on to meet the armed men,
He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted,
Neither turneth he back from the sword.
The quiver rattleth against him,
The glittering spear and the javelin.
He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage;
Neither standeth he still at the sound of the trumpet.
As oft as the trumpet soundeth, he saith: Ha! ha!
And he smelleth the battle afar off,
The thunder of the captains and the shouting of the men.

Elegiac Poetry.

DAVID'S LAMENT ON SAUL AND JONATHAN.[2]

Weep, O Juda!
Grieve, O Israel!
On thy heights are the slain:
How are the mighty fallen!

Tell it not in Geth;
Publish it not in the streets of Ascalon!
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice;
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

Mountains of Gelboe! May no dew descend
Nor rain upon you, fields of death!

[1] Job xxxix, 19–25. [2] II Kings i, 18–27.

For there the shield of the mighty was defiled,
The shield of Saul, as of one not anointed with oil.

From the blood of the slain,
From the fat of the mighty,
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,
And the sword of Saul returned not empty.

Saul and Jonathan, the beloved and the lovely!
In life and in death they were not divided.
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.

Daughters of Israel weep over Saul!
Who clothed you with scarlet and fine linen,
Who put golden jewels upon your apparel.

How are the mighty fallen
In the midst of the battle!

O Jonathan
Slain upon the high places!

I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan!
Very delightsome wert thou to me:
Thy love to me was wonderful
Passing the love of women.

How are the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war perished!

A Maxim.

Let another man praise thee,
And not thy own mouth;
A stranger,
And not thy own lips.[1]

[1] Prov. xxvii, 2.

Anthems for the Inauguration of Jerusalem.[1]

I.

AT THE FOOT OF THE HILL.

Choir.

The earth is the LORD'S and the fulness thereof;
The world, and they who dwell therein,
For He hath founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the floods.

A Voice.

Who dare ascend the hill of the LORD?
And who dare stand in His holy place?

Another Voice.

He that hath clean hands and a pure heart,
Who doth not lift up his soul unto vanity,
And never swears deceitfully.

Choir.

He shall receive a blessing from the LORD,
And righteousness from God, his Savior.
This is the generation of them that seek Him,
That seek Thy face, O God of Jacob.

II.

BEFORE THE GATES.

I.

Choir.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And lift yourselves up, ye everlasting doors,
That the King of glory may come in.

A Voice (as it were from the gates).

Who is the King of glory?

[1] Ps. xxiii.

Choir.

The LORD strong and mighty,
The LORD mighty in battle.

II.

Choir.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And lift yourselves up, ye everlasting doors,
That the King of glory may come in.

A Voice (as it were from the gates).

Who, then, is the King of glory?

Choir.

The LORD of hosts,
He is the King of glory.

To these selections from Biblical poetry, we subjoin only two passages in prose as samples, the one of the prophetical Discourses, and the other of the philosophical Essays contained in the Sacred Scriptures.

Prophetical Address.

THE GREAT ARRAIGNMENT.[1]

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the LORD hath spoken: I have brought up and exalted children, but they have rebelled against Me.

The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Woe to the sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a wicked race, children acting corruptly: they have forsaken the LORD, they have blasphemed the Holy One of Israel, turned away backwards. Why will ye be still stricken, that ye revolt more and more? Every head is diseased, and every heart is sick. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness

[1] Isaias i, 2–31.

in it—wounds and bruises and festering sores: they have not been pressed out, nor bound up, nor mollified with oil. Your country is a waste; your cities are burned with fire; your land strangers devour in your presence, and it is desolate as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Sion is left as a booth in a vineyard, as a night-hut in a field of cucumbers, as a besieged city. Had not the LORD of hosts left us a small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, we should have been like unto Gomorrha.

Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear to the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrha. To what purpose is the multitude of your victims to me? saith the LORD. I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed calves; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks and lambs and he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts. Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination to me; away with new moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies—I cannot bear iniquity and a festive crowd. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a burden I am weary to bear. And when ye stretch out your hands, I hide mine eyes from you: even when you pray much, I do not hear: your hands are full of blood.

Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your deeds from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do good; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow: if they be red like crimson, they shall be as white wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

How is the faithful city become a harlot! she that was full of judgment! righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers. Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water. Thy rulers are rebellious, and companions of thieves; every one of them loveth bribes and runneth after rewards; they judge not

the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them. Therefore, saith the LORD, the LORD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will relieve me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: and I will turn my hand upon thee, thoroughly purge away thy dross and take away thy alloy: I will restore thy judges as in the time of old, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city. Sion shall be redeemed through judgment, and her returning ones through righteousness. But the destruction of the transgressors and the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed. For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye must blush for the gardens which ye had chosen. For ye shall be as an oak with withered leaves, and as a garden without water. And the wealthy shall be as tow and his work as a spark; and both shall burn together, and none shall quench them.

Essay.

THE VANITY OF DESIRE.[1]

He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance will increase: this also is vanity. When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what advantage is there to the owner thereof, save the beholding them with his eyes?

The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the fulness of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.

There is a grievous evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept to the hurt of the owner: these riches perish by evil adventure, and nothing comes down to his son. As he came forth from his mother's womb, naked shall he go again as he came, and shall take nothing away with him of his labor. A most grievous evil that in all points as he came, so shall he go. Ah! what profit hath he who thus labors for the wind? All his days he spends in darkness: he is sore vexed, hath sickness and wrath.

[1] Ecclesiastes v, 9–vi.

Behold, that which I have seen to be good alike and comely, is for one to eat and to drink and to enjoy the fruit of his labor all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for this is his portion. Every man also to whom God hath given riches, and wealth, and hath given him to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor, has a great gift from God: he shall not much remember the days of his life, because God entertaineth his heart with delight.

There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is heavy upon men: a man to whom God giveth riches, wealth and honor so that he lacketh nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity and a grievous evil. Suppose a man beget a hundred children and live many, very many years, but his soul be not filled with good, and moreover he have no burial, of this man I say that an untimely birth is better than he. The latter cometh in vanity, and departeth in darkness, its name is buried in oblivion, and moreover it hath not seen the sun nor known it, and it is better with it than with the other, yea though this live two thousand years, but he enjoy no good. Do not all go to one place? . . . . .

It will be easily noticed that the prose passages just quoted do not correspond exactly to any kind of literary composition current among us; yet they are extracts from two great sections of the Bible, which are commonly called the Prophetic and Wisdom Literature respectively, and which are replete with pieces of transcendant literary beauty. This shows that over and above almost all the forms of poetry and prose writing which we find in our Western literatures, the Bible contains others peculiarly Eastern, but none the less beautiful.

It is this richness in literary forms combined together with an unsurpassed perfection in nearly

all of them, which has made of the Bible a most influential literature. "If we ask," says justly very Rev. J. B. Hogan, "if we ask the greatest orators and writers of the last three centuries, what has led them to read and study a book seemingly so foreign to their purpose, they will tell us that they find in it more original literary beauty than anywhere else; that the Bible narratives, for instance, are more exquisitely simple and true to nature, the poetry of the Psalms more airy and graceful in touch; that Jōb is more solemn and sublime, the Prophets more vehement and irresistible in their denunciations, more tender in their appeals, the Gospels, finally, and the Epistles more startling, and, at the same time, more touching, more persuasive in their varying tones, than any other literary productions."[1] In the eyes of Milton "there are no songs to be compared with the songs of Sion, no orations equal to those of the prophets," and the influence of the Bible upon his literary genius is most apparent in such great poems as the *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*. Bacon has more than seventy allusions to the Bible in twenty-four of his Essays, and Addison, Johnson, Pope, Young abound in Scriptural reminiscences, and that in their most beautiful and impressive passages. R. W. Emerson tells us that "the elevation of this book may be measured by observing how

[1] Very Rev. J. B. Hogan, *Clerical Studies*, p. 453.

certainly all elevation of thought clothes itself in the words and forms of thought of that book. . . . Shakespeare, the first literary genius of the world, the highest in whom the moral is not the predominating element, leans on the Bible; his poetry presupposes it." The *Messiah* of Klopstock, *Esther and Athalie* of Racine, the works of Shakespeare, and the *Divina Commedia* of Dante, besides the masterpieces of Milton already referred to, are standing and unimpeachable witnesses to the wonderful influence exercised by our sacred literature upon the greatest literary men of past ages.

Very great also has been the influence of the Bible upon the leading poets and prose writers during the XIXth century. Not only *Queen Mary* and *The Princess*, but also, and especially, *In Memoriam*, of Lord Tennyson bear the distinct impress of Biblical thought and expression. So is it, and perhaps even to a greater extent, with Longfellow's *Christus*, *Evangeline*, and many other of his original poems. Daniel Webster, the great American orator, says: "From the time that at my mother's feet or on my father's knee, I first learned to lisp verses from the sacred writings, they have been my daily study and vigilant contemplation. If there be anything in my style or thoughts to be commended, the credit is due to my kind parents in instilling into my mind an early love of the Scriptures." In a like strain, John Ruskin, the leading English art-

critic, writes: "All that I taught of Art, everything that I have written, whatever greatness there has been in any thought of mine, . . . has simply been due to the fact that, when I was a child, my mother daily read with me a part of the Bible and daily made me learn a part of it by heart." Coleridge, Walter Scott, Lord Macaulay, Charles Dickens, Thomas Carlyle, J. A. Froude, R. W. Emerson, Goethe and Lamartine, and a host of prominent writers, bear also willing witness to the supremacy of the Bible over all other literature, and it would be a pleasure to set forth their testimony,[1] were it not that it would lengthen this Lecture beyond due measure. We cannot forbear, however, to give here the words of an eminent novelist, Mr. Hall Caine, who, in the *McClure's Magazine* discloses the truly surprising extent in which he has turned Biblical characters into profit. He says: "I think that I know my Bible as few literary men know it. There is no book in the world like it, and the finest novels ever written fall far short in interest of any one of the stories it tells. Whatever strong situations I have in my books are not of my creation, but are taken from the Bible. 'The Deemster' is the story of the Prodigal Son. 'The Bondman' is the story of Esau and Jacob. 'The Scapegoat' is the story of Elias and his sons, but with Samuel as a little

[1] Most of these testimonies will be found in F. W. Farrar, *The Bible, its Meaning and Supremacy*, Chap. xviii.

girl; and 'The Manxman' is the story of David and Urías."

As regards the influence of the Bible as a literature upon popular language and conceptions, it is far deeper and extensive than one would at first suppose it to be. During the Middle Ages, "the Mysteries," or popular dramas on sacred topics and the last sample of which is the Ober-Ammergau "Passion-Play," were naturally composed in Biblical language, and thus made the masses familiar with the thoughts, images and oriental idioms of Holy Writ. Again, when our modern languages were being formed, they underwent the direct influence of Biblical conceptions and expressions, so that, down to the present day, even popular speech contains a large percentage of words, comparisons and images traceable to the Sacred Scriptures. Hence it is that Theodore Parker could truly say: "the Bible is woven into the literature of the scholar and colors the talk of the street." Moreover, in school and church, children and adults, rich and poor, are individually and constantly brought under the influence of the divine word, with the natural result that the words of the Bible will occur to their minds and find place on their lips when giving vent to their religious feelings of surrender to the divine will, of sorrow for sin, of thanksgiving for benefits conferred, etc., etc. To the same deep and lasting influence of Biblical literature upon the people's mind we must also

refer the frequent allusions to the facts and personages of Holy Writ that we meet in common parlance, together with the peculiar attraction which the multitudes feel instinctively toward the public speaker who is known often and happily to quote the Sacred Writings.

In bringing to a close this Lecture, I beg leave to introduce one quotation more, because it brings out well the trend of the foregoing remarks upon the influence of the Bible as a literature, and emphasises the practical necessity of a close acquaintance with the sacred books for one who wishes to become proficient in merely human literature. "Wholly apart from its religious or from its ethical value," says Mr. Charles Dudley Warner in *Harper's Magazine*, "the Bible is the one book that no intelligent person who wishes to come into contact with the world of thought and to share the ideas of the great minds of the Christian era can afford to be ignorant of. All modern literature and all art are permeated with it. There is scarcely a great work in the language that can be fully understood and enjoyed without this knowledge, so full it is of allusions and illustrations from the Bible. This is true of fiction, of poetry, of economic and philosophic works, and also of the scientific and even agnostic treatises. It is not at all a question of religion, or theology, or of dogma, it is a question of general intelligence."

It should not be supposed, however, that the reading of our sacred literature should be carried out solely, or even chiefly, with a view to be better able to appreciate secular literature. As has been distinctly stated in the course of this lecture, the Bible is a literature in itself so beautiful that it fully deserves to be studied for its own sake. Whoever peruses it diligently, constantly, methodically, must needs soon feel the refining and elevating influence of the literary masterpieces it contains. This thoughtful and assiduous reading will gradually enable him to notice in them new literary beauties which had hitherto escaped his attention, and for which he would look in vain outside these ancient and fragmentary Old Hebrew and Early Christian literatures which make up the Holy Bible.

LECTURE II.

THE HISTORICAL ASPECT OF THE BIBLE.

"The Bible is the oldest and truest vindication of the dignity of history."—(*B. F. Westcott*).

SYNOPSIS OF LECTURE II.

The Historical Aspect of the Bible.

I. The Historical Books of the Bible:

1. Which are they and why are they called thus?
2. Their General Contents.
3. Compared with
   - the Other Ancient Historical Books.
   - Our Modern Books of History.

II. Historical Data Outside the Historical Books:

1. In what parts of the Bible chiefly found.
2. Their Manifold Importance.

III. The Truthful Character of the History Contained in the Bible:

1. Great Importance of this Question at the Present Day.
2. This Truthfulness proved by
   - Obvious Candor of the Sacred Writers.
   - Comparison between the Several Accounts of the Same Fact.
   - Contrast with uninspired Books.
   - Accounts of Eastern Travellers and Data of Recent Discoveries.
3. Remaining Obscurities undeniable, but not disquieting.

Concluding Remarks.

LECTURE II.

The Historical Aspect of the Bible.

"The Bible is the oldest and truest vindication of the dignity of history."—(*B. F. Westcott.*)

As God was pleased to put His revelation in the form of a literature, so was He pleased also to imbed it in the annals of the people of His choice. And just as the Bible will ever be considered as containing one of the world's literatures, second to none, so too will it ever be looked upon as the most wonderful record of history. Viewed from this general and most important standpoint, "the Bible is," as Westcott graphically puts it, "the oldest and truest vindication of the dignity of history." We shall therefore devote this second lecture to a brief study of the Historical Aspect of the Sacred Scriptures.

I. Many of our inspired writings of both the Old and New Testaments, fall under the common head of the Historical books of the Bible. The bulk of these in the Old Testament forms two parallel series: one consisting of the books of Genesis to the fourth book of Kings, and the other comprising the books of Paralipomenon or Chronicles.

This twofold series is followed in both the Catholic and Protestant copies of the Bible, by the Memoirs of Esdras and Nehemias, and our Catholic Old Testament closes with the historical books of the Machabees, which, on various, but inadequate grounds, are regarded by Protestants as not belonging to the Sacred Scriptures. To these historical records, Catholic writers in general add, as likewise historical, the books of Ruth, Tobias, Judith, and Esther. As regards the New Testament, all Biblical scholars hold as historical only our four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, while they consider the first three Evangelical narratives—those of Sts. Matthew, Mark, and Luke,—as forming by themselves a distinct series, inasmuch as they cover the same ground and follow the same general outline.

The following scheme will enable the reader to realize, at a glance, the order and number of the historical books of the Bible:

I. *Old Testament.*

Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy).
Josue, Judges, I–IV Kings.
I, II Paralipomenon (Chronicles).
Esdras, Nehemias.
[Ruth, Tobias, Judith, Esther].
I, II Machabees.

II. *New Testament.*

The first three Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke.
St. John's Gospel.
Acts of the Apostles.

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The historical object of these books is not ascertained in the same manner for them all. Some of them, as for instance, our third Gospel and the second book of the Machabees, are to be considered as historical for the simple reason that their respective author mentions explicitly his purpose of narrating past events.[1] In the case of most, this distinctly historical aim is not set forth; yet it can easily be inferred from the general character and literary form exhibited by their contents: they detail directly and almost exclusively the events of one or several periods of Jewish History, and they do so in that plain narrative style which is peculiar to historical records. It must be said, however, that in connection with some books—this is notably the case with the books of Ruth, Tobias, Judith, and Esther,—their contents and literary form are not, in the eyes of many scholars, conclusive proofs of their historical object.

Be this as it may, it is beyond doubt that the books, the historical purpose of which is granted by all, record God's dealings with His chosen people, that is with the Jewish nation before the coming of His Son, and next with the Christian people, the "Israel of God"[2] after that great event. Thus in the Old Testament, the books which fall into two parallel series, viz.: Genesis—IV Kings, and I, II Paralipomenon,—narrate the selection and rapid

[1] Cfr. Luke i, 1–4; II Machabees ii, 24–23; xv, 38–40.
[2] Gal. vi, 16.

growth of the Jewish nation out of the descendants of Abraham; the liberation from Egyptian bondage and settlement in the Land of Promise; the gradual change of the Hebrew commonwealth into a monarchy; the sudden rise of a Jewish empire under Solomon, followed by its no less sudden disruption upon the death of this monarch; the formation of two kingdoms, usually at war with each other, and destroyed one after the other by the repeated attacks of Assyria and Babylonia. The Memoirs of Esdras and Nehemias then take up the story and describe the return of a small Jewish remnant from Babylon, and the laborious Restoration of the Hebrew commonwealth. Finally, the books of the Machabees tell us of the gallant fight for and glorious conquest of political and religious liberty, against the Syrian masters of Palestine. After a gap of over a century, the Gospels sketch the coming of the Messias long expected by the Jews, "who came unto his own, and his own received not,"[1] and they describe him as the King of the Jews, rejected and put to death by his own subjects. But after his resurrection and ascension, according to the narrative of the Acts, "the faith in his name" is preached in Jerusalem, in Samaria, and far and wide, especially by the apostle of the Gentiles, so that the "nation" destined to inherit "the Kingdom of God"[2] has been rapidly formed out of the Jewish and the Gentile world.

[1] John, i, 11. [2] Matt. xxi, 43.

Together with these general contents, the historical books of the Bible supply a large number of particulars respecting the events detailed therein, and enable one to realize well the varying fortunes of the chosen people of God. Even those among them which refer to the oldest period of Jewish history, the patriarchal age, as it is called, describe a real condition of life in the East. In this sense at least, they are fully historical, and in striking contrast with the oldest records embodied in the sacred literatures of Persia, India, China, and even Greece. "It will be objected," says the unbeliever, E. Renan, "that the golden age of the Aryans has quite as many documents to back it up as the patriarchal age, and yet the former is only a dream. The two cases do not run on parallel lines. The patriarchal age existed; it exists still in those countries where the nomad life of the Arabs is preserved in its original purity."[1] As regards the other historical books of the Old Testament, they have, it is true, somewhat of a counterpart in such Greek narratives as those of Herodotus (born in 484 B. C.), Thucydides († ab. 400 B. C.), and Xenophon († 350 B. C.). Yet even here, considerable differences can be noticed; differently from these historical works of Greece, those of the Hebrew nation are numerous, cover a large extent of ground, are usually anonymous, based on

[1] *History of the People of Israel*, Vol. I, Preface, p. xiii sq. (Engl. Transl.).

ancient documents, and written according to a less definite plan. Finally, when the historical books of the New Testament are examined closely in respect of contents, materials used, manner of writing, etc., they are found not to have any real parallel, not even in Xenophon's *Memoirs* of Socrates, to which they were at times likened by early Christian apologists.

Differences of hardly less important a nature come to sight when we compare the historical books of the Bible with our modern books of history. As is well stated by Prof. Driver, "the authors of the Hebrew historical books" (and this applies to a large extent to our Christian historical works in the New Testament), "do not, as a modern historian would do, *re-write* the matter in their own language; they excerpt from the sources at their disposal such passages as are suitable to their purpose, and incorporate them in their work, sometimes adding matter of their own, but often (as it seems) introducing only such modifications of form as are necessary for the purpose of fitting them together or accommodating them to their plan. The Hebrew historiographer, as we know him, is essentially a *compiler* or arranger of pre-existing documents; he is not himself an original author. Hebrew writers, however, exhibit, as a rule, such strongly marked individualities of style that the documents, or sources, thus combined can generally be distinguished from each other, and from the

comments of the compiler, without difficulty. The literary differences are, moreover, frequently accompanied by differences of treatment or representation of the history."[1] This process of compilation, which is manifest in such poetical works as the books of Psalms and Proverbs, is put beyond doubt, as regards the historical writings of the Bible, by a comparison between the books of Kings and Chronicles, between our first three Gospels, and by a close study of such works as the books of Judges and our Pentateuch. It can therefore be considered as one of the leading features of the historical parts of our sacred literature, when contrasted with our modern books of history. In this respect, the historical books of the Bible resemble the great collections of canons or the annals of ecclesiastical history, which were gradually compiled and constantly added to during the Middle Ages, rather than our modern historical works.

II. Side by side with the historical books thus far spoken of, our Bible comprises other works, which, without having for special aim to detail past events, yet contain valuable historical data. Thus, according to some scholars, the dramatic book of Job is based on history, in about the same manner as Coriolanus, Julius Cæsar and other such plays of Shakespeare. Again, the writings of the prophets, though not directly historical, exhibit in the dis-

[1] S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, revised and enlarged edition, p. 4 sq.

courses of which they are especially made up, many more allusions to past events, to oriental customs and manners, to the actual fears, expectations, failings, views political, moral or religious of their contemporaries, than do the great speeches of Edmund Burke, O'Connell or Webster. In like manner, such didactic books as Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, the book of Psalms and the Epistles of St. Paul, are of perhaps greater importance to the student of Sacred history, than any corresponding works which could be pointed out in other literatures.

It should be borne in mind in this connection, that writings which have not history for their special object, may contain references to facts or conditions of things of which there is no trace in books directly historical. The prophecies of Jeremias and of Isaias, for instance, allude to the Jewish religious and political parties of the time, to the foreign relations of Judæa with the great powers of Egypt, Assyria and Babylonia, in such a manner as to make known facts otherwise unrecorded, and are, on that account, of special historical value. The same must be said of several Epistles of St. Paul, for without them we would know very little about the actual organization, religious and moral life of the early Christian communities. In fact, there is hardly a book of the Bible, outside of the historical writings proper, whose contents when very closely studied, do not yield many details regarding local customs, transient views, religious practices, etc., of which we have no

inkling in books directly concerned with facts of greater moment. But even when the other portions of Holy Writ simply make references to events already recorded in the historical books, their testimony should not be aside as superfluous. These references are usually in the nature of a transient allusion to such events as to facts well-known in the time of the writer, and therefore bear unimpeachable witness to their preservation in the course of ages. Thus then, by means of the historical data outside the historical books of the Bible, our knowledge of Sacred history is either considerably increased, or at least powerfully confirmed.

III. We now come to the chief point of the present Lecture, to wit, the truthful character of the history contained in our Sacred writings. Are the historical statements of the Bible truly reliable? this is the great question of the day, as it has been indeed for many years, both within and without—more especially without—the pale of the Catholic Church. To account for such frame of mind on the part of our contemporaries, we have only to remember the vigorous and independent manner in which most historians have carried out their work during the nineteenth century. We are all aware of their unwearied efforts to get at the sources of modern history by ransacking the great libraries of Europe; of their unflagging zeal to organize and conduct the work of exploration through Eastern lands; of their wonderful success in unearthing old documents and

in enriching therewith the great museums and libraries of Germany, France, Great Britain and Egypt; and finally, of the inexhaustible supply of information they gathered therefrom and communicated to the public in the form of books, pamphlets, articles of reviews, reports of learned societies, etc., etc. While thus collecting and utilizing materials, their faculty of weighing facts and testing theories already trained by specialists in the leading universities and other special schools of Europe, was strengthened and developed by actual contact with documents, by personal intercourse with scholars in congresses, by the sharp and unremitting criticism of books and reviews, by everything, in a word, which adds acuteness and many-sidedness to man's natural power of discerning truth from error. As might well be expected, this most searching light of modern criticism was not cast simply on the works of merely human history, it was focussed also upon the historical statements of our sacred books. In fact, rationalistic scholars of Holland, France, and especially Germany were untiring in their efforts to discredit the Bible, and made use of every available piece of evidence to show the untrustworthiness of the biblical records. Year after year, new books, pamphlets, articles appeared over prominent names, were translated into foreign languages, summarized and critized, on the whole, favorably, by our leading reviews and newspapers, with the natural outcome that their conclusions antagonistic to the reliability of the his-

tory contained in the Bible, became widely known together with the most captious arguments in their favor. All this accounts for the deep and widespread disquiet that prevails in the Protestant public, and from which a fair number of minds among Catholics have not entirely escaped, concerning the truthful character of the history contained in the Bible. This question is one of great difficulty and complexity, and we cannot undertake here anything like a detailed study of it. We shall therefore confine ourselves to a few general remarks going far toward proving the full reliability of the historical statements of our sacred books, and suggesting to Christian believers grounds "to satisfy everyone that asketh them a reason of the hope which is in them."[1]

The first reason to believe in the truthful character of the sacred writers is their obvious candor. Their manifest tone of sincerity in recording events, is never surpassed, if ever equalled, by that of any trustworthy historian. Thus, they record not only the glorious deeds of their nation in peace and war, but also its military reverses;[2] its repeated falls into idolatry together with their most shameful consequences;[3] its internal political and religious divisions, etc. In like manner, the mistakes, faults, and even heinous crimes of its greatest heroes,

[1] Petr. iii, 15.

[2] Cfr. III Kings xiv, 25 sq., for instance.

[3] Cfr. the entire book of Judges, and Numb. xxv; IV Kings xxi; etc.; etc.

princes, chief priests, etc., are stated with wonderful simplicity; as, for instance, in the case of Jacob's lie to his father Isaac;[1] of David's fall into the sins of adultery and murder;[2] of Solomon's idolatrous practices;[3] of a high priest's betrayal of the moral and national interests of his people;[4] etc., etc. Other proofs of this same candor on the part of the sacred historians, such as the distinct mention of their sources of information,[5] their constant use of the varying accounts found therein, without any attempt at bringing them into harmony; etc., could also be enlarged upon. It is true, that, at times, we may notice in the narratives of the sacred writers some features, which seem to disprove this candor; yet, even the features which apparently tell most in that direction, are really no conclusive proofs of insincerity. This is the case, for instance, with the silence of the writer of our books of Paralipomenon (Chronicles) regarding the heinous crimes of David and Solomon, which are disclosed to us only by the author of our books of Kings. For we do not rightfully charge with insincerity the biographer of a saint, who writing for the purpose of edification, would narrate only what makes for that purpose. Nor do we justly tax with untruthfulness a writer of Church history,—and

[1] Gen. xxvii. [2] II Kings xi–xii.
[3] III Kings xi. [4] II Mach. iv.
[5] Cfr. III Kings xi, 41; xiv, 29; II Paralip. xii, 15; xxvii, 7; xxxii, 32; II Mach. ii, 24; etc.; etc.

the books of Chronicles are now considered as containing especially Ecclesiastical history,—who, for fear of scandalizing his readers, would make no allusion to certain facts derogatory to the character of prominent personages in question. We would likewise be wrong in suspecting of insincerity the same Chronicler, because of the glowing, and as it were idealizing, tone, wherewith he brings to end his narrative of Solomon's reign, saying: "And Solomon was magnified above all the Kings of the earth for riches and glory. And all the Kings of the earth desired to see the face of Solomon, that they might hear the wisdom which God had given in his heart. . . . And he made silver as plentiful in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars as common as the sycamores which grow in the plains. . . ."[1] Between Solomon's time and that of the Chronicler, a long period had elapsed, during which the faults and crimes of the Jewish monarch had been gradually lost sight of and the glorious features of his rule emphasized and idealized, so that the Chronicler is simply faithful when he reproduces the picture of Solomon as it existed in his time.

A second proof of the truthful character of the history contained in the Bible, may be drawn from a comparison between the several accounts of the same fact found therein. However strange this may appear at first sight, it is nevertheless beyond

[1] II Paralip. ix, 22 sqq.

question that the moral certainty which belongs to history is reached all the more securely, when the several accounts of the same event, while in substantial agreement are found to vary as regards the details recorded. It is but seldom, for instance, that we feel sure of the occurrence of an important fact, when we hear of it through only one dispatch from the far-distant seat of a war, even though it be repeated by all the papers of the land through the agency of the *Associated Press*. On the contrary, we naturally consider as reliable the news concerning a far less important fact given us as having occurred in the same distant place, provided we find it given by several different correspondents with differences as to wording, particulars stated, arrangement of details, etc., because all such variations bespeak independent sources of information. In like manner, statements as to facts very distant from us in time, appear all the more trustworthy, in proportion as their divergencies concerning minute particulars, prove the absence of collusion between their respective authors. This is true of events recorded in ordinary books of history; it is true also, and in a particular manner, of the facts mentioned in our Gospels, that is in those books of Holy Writ, the historical character of which is granted on all hands. If any one compares the several accounts, for example, of St. Peter's denials, in Matt. xxvi, 69–75; Mk. xv, 66–72; Luke xxii, 55–62; John xviii, 15–18; of the cure of the

blind men near Jericho, in Matt. xx, 29–34; Mk. x, 46–52; Luke xviii, 35–43; or even of Our Lord's resurrection, in Matt. xxviii, 1–8; Mk. xvi, 1–8; Luke xxiv, 1–8; John xx, 1; he will easily discover that amid a substantial agreement, there is a considerable number of minor discrepancies. Now, what should he infer from this? Two things more particularly, which were pointed out, many centuries ago, by such illustrious Fathers as St. John Chrysostom († 407) and St. Augustine († 430). The latter, in his work on *The Agreement of the Evangelists*, wherein he deals with the minute discrepancies of our inspired Gospels, calls attention to the fact that the Holy Spirit having allowed such variations to exist under the pen of the sacred writers, has thereby confirmed the value of human testimony, in the case when witnesses telling the same story vary in their several accounts. His words are as follows: "If any one affirms that the Evangelists ought to have had that power imparted to them by the Holy Spirit which would secure them against all variations in words, arrangements, or figures given, that person fails to perceive that just in proportion as the authority of the Evangelists is made pre-eminent, the credit of all other men who offer true statements is rendered all the stronger. For seeing how different witnesses may tell the same story, and deviate from one another in certain particulars, without being justly impeached for untruthfulness, they also are emboldened to tell

the truth, being able to point to precedents set them by the Evangelists."[1] But beside this first inference, there is another one more directly to our purpose and most explicitly stated by the first Father of the Church above referred to. St. John Chrysostom, in his first Homily on St. Matthew (§ 2), says that "the very fact of the divergencies between the Evangelists is a strong argument in favor of their reliability, inasmuch as if they had agreed perfectly in everything,—as regards time, place, words used,—adversaries would at once suspect them of collusion."

But while variations as to minor particulars thus tend to confirm the truthfulness of the sacred records, the very character of the events described, of the particulars given, when contrasted with those to be met with in uninspired books, is a further argument in favor of this same truthfulness. I have already cited the words of such an opponent of divine revelation as E. Renan, telling us of a total difference in this respect between our oldest books or parts of books of the Old Testament, and those of India, Persia, China and even Greece: while the statements of the latter regarding an ancient "golden age" refer only to "a dream," the Biblical statements concerning "the patriarchal age" concern a reality, for this patriarchal age "exists still in those countries where the nomad life of the Arabs is preserved in its original purity."

[1] *On the Agreement of the Evangelists,* Book ii, § 28.

I will simply add here a few extracts from the uninspired writings known under the general name of the "Apocryphal Gospels," and the fanciful, ridiculous or even impious character of which proclaims aloud the unhistorical character of such works, while by way of contrast, it evinces the truthfulness of our Evangelical narratives. "Now his father (Joseph, foster-father of Jesus) was a carpenter, and made at that time ploughs and yokes; and a couch was ordered of him by a certain rich man, to make it for him; and one of the pieces, known as a side piece, being too short, they knew not what to do, wherefore the child Jesus said to his father, Joseph—Lay down the two pieces of wood, and let the centre of one be upon the centre of the other. And Joseph did as the child said to him; and Jesus stood at the other end, and took hold of the wood which was too short, and stretched it and made it equal to the other."[1] "Another day, the Lord Jesus went out into the street, and seeing some boys who had met to play, he followed them; but the boys hid themselves from him. Therefore, when the Lord Jesus had come to the door of a certain house, and saw the women who stood there, he asked them whither the boys had gone. And when they told him that there was nobody there, the Lord Jesus said again, What are these whom ye see in the vault? They answered that they were kids three years old.

[1] The Gospel of Thomas, chap. xiii.

And the Lord Jesus cried aloud and said, Come out here, O kids, to your shepherd! Then the boys came out, having the form of kids, and began to skip about him . . . ."—"Again, another day, the Lord Jesus was at the water-side with some boys, and they made little pools again. Now the Lord Jesus had made twelve sparrows and ranged them, three on each side, about his pool. And it was the Sabbath day. So the son of Ananias, a Jew, coming up and seeing them doing such things, was angry and indignant. Do you then, said he, make figures of clay on the Sabbath day? And running up in haste, he destroyed their pools. Now when the Lord Jesus had clapped his hands over the sparrows he had made, they flew away chirping. Then the son of Ananias came also to the pool of Jesus, and kicking it down with his shoes, the water ran out of it. And the Lord Jesus said to him, As that water hath disappeared, so also thy life shall disappear; and immediately the boy withered away."[1]

The last, and by far the strongest, evidence for the truthful character of the history contained in the Bible, is derived from the accounts of Eastern travellers and data of modern discoveries. Whoever has, on the one hand, carefully noted the principal narratives of journeys made through the East, and recent discoveries of ruins, cylinders, inscriptions, monuments, records of various kinds, etc., in Bible

[1] Cfr. *The Arabic Gospel of the Infancy*, chaps. xl, xlvi.

lands, and has, on the other, endeavored to realize their bearing on our sacred history, will readily and fully indorse the following words of Henry A. Harper, at the beginning of his work, entitled, *From Abraham to David:* "The author is firmly convinced that the more the lands of the Bible and the customs of the East are studied and understood, the fuller will be the light that is thrown on the brief statements in the Bible, and the more those statements will be found to be accurate to the last degree." Again, anyone who takes up and peruses such works as those of Father Vigouroux: *The Bible and Modern Discoveries*,[1] or of Dr. C. Geikie, *Hours with the Bible*, or the handy volume of the eminent archæologist just quoted, H. A. Harper, entitled, *The Bible and Modern Discoveries*, will soon find that as regards not only important events, but also very minute details of geography, history, manners and customs, the sacred books have proved, in countless instances, perfectly accurate, when confronted with the ascertained data of recent travels and modern discoveries. In this connection, I reproduce here a passage written some time ago, and showing how "the cruel revenge taken upon Joseph by his brothers, as related in the book of Genesis (xxxvii, 12–28), is perfectly true both to Biblical topography and to Oriental

[1] The work of Father Vigouroux has not been translated into English. Its original title is: *La Bible et les Découvertes Modernes.* Paris, 5th edit., 1889.

customs. The wide expanse of the valley of Sichem, where Jacob's children had fed their flocks for some time, and to which Joseph was sent by his father, contrasts indeed favorably with the barren hills of the country farther south, but it cannot compare with the pasture-ground of Dothain, and this is why the children of Jacob, who had first moved from Hebron, their father's residence, to Sichem, had left it for Dothain, now identified with a spot bearing this ancient name, and about twenty miles north of Sichem. In repairing to Dothain to find out his brothers, Joseph, after climbing the high hill north of Samaria, had to descend the steep northern slope of the ridge, and at Dothain, in the plain below, he would easily be seen 'afar off,' and even recognized by his brothers, sharp-sighted, as all Arabs are to-day. At first they intended to put him to death, but they next agreed to cast him into one of the many dry pits or underground cisterns still visible in the district. Finally, they acceded to Juda's proposal to sell their brother to Ismaelite merchants whom they noticed coming by the great caravan road from Galaad to Egypt, which still passes by Dothain. The brown-skinned children of Ismael, who brought camels richly laden from the East to the Nile, are drawn to life on the Egyptian monuments; and of the three kinds of spices they were carrying to Egypt—and are even now the principal articles of commerce of their descendants between the East

and that country—two are named in recently discovered papyri, while the odor of the third may still be detected among those of other materials used in the embalming of mummies. That they should willingly purchase Joseph on their way to Egypt is all the more natural because Syrian slaves had a special value on Egyptian markets . . . ."[1]

It is true that at times the plain meaning of our sacred records was far indeed from this perfect harmony with archæological data, or even appeared in glaring contradiction with their positive testimony; yet, time and again, further knowledge has proved both biblical history and archæological science harmonious. Long, for instance, it was objected to the truthfulness of the passage of Genesis which describes the temptation of Joseph to adultery by his mistress "day by day,"[2] that it supposes a freedom of intercourse between men and women which though it exists among us, is entirely foreign to customs in Egypt and in fact all through the East. The point seemed well taken, because the unchangeable character of the habits of the East was borne out by the universal consent of travellers and explorers. Time came, however, when Egyptian paintings were discovered representing men and women placed side by side at festivals, thus proving that formerly there was between them freer intercourse than now. Time came, too, when a papyrus was found on which is

[1] *Outlines of Jewish History*, p. 38 sq. (New York, 1897).
[2] Gen. xxxix, 7, 10, 11.

written what is called "the Tale of the two brothers," a story before the times of Joseph and resembling his in many ways. It tells us how a wife of the elder brother tempted the younger one to adultery; how, as he refused, she "made herself like one who had suffered violence," and falsely accused the younger brother; and how her husband, in a rage, threatened his life, which was saved by the protection of the Sun-god. Thus has it been shown to evidence that the description of Genesis was really true to ancient Egyptian life and manners. Thus also were scholars led to find the reason of such difference between the modern and the ancient habits of Egypt; they rightly account for it by admitting that the greater freedom of intercourse which prevailed formerly between men and women in that country and the Eastern lands generally, has been restricted to its present narrower limits, by the influence of Mohammedanism, wherever this religion so degrading for womanhood has been adopted.

But there is another, broader, and no less striking manner, in which recent discoveries have proved the truthful character of the history contained in the Bible. While the sacred writers tell us simply of the events in which their nation is concerned, and only in so far as it is concerned in them, their statements harmonize so perfectly with the accounts of the same events as made known to us by newly-discovered inscriptions, that both sources of information are usually found to complete each other. It

will be remembered, for example, that in the third chapter of the ivth book of Kings we have the following brief notice concerning Mesa, King of Moab, in the time of Achab, who was the son of Amri, and his successor upon the throne of Israel: "Mesa, King of Moab, was a sheep-master and paid to the King of Israel a hundred thousand lambs and a hundred thousand rams, with their fleeces." This was plainly an enormous impost upon so small a country as the territory of Moab; so that we find it only natural when we read in the following verse, that "when Achab was dead" (slain on a Syrian battlefield),[1] "the King of Moab" thinking it a favorable opportunity, "rebelled against the King of Israel," *i. e.* refused to pay him so exorbitant a tribute. If we now turn to the monument known as the Moabite stone, which was discovered in 1869, and which gives Mesa's own account of his relations with Israel, we find it not only confirms the fact of that rebellion, but furnishes further information as to its issues and results; while, on the other hand, the Biblical narrative gives a clue to its cause, of which the Moabite inscription says nothing. In like manner, many of the rebellions of the Jewish Kings against the suzerainty of Assyria, which are simply stated as facts in the Biblical narrative, find their natural completion in those inscriptions which make known to us something of the general conditions of the time; by their means we can see that in withholding tribute, the

[1] III Kings xxii, 35.

rulers of Palestine were simply availing themselves of the serious difficulties with which the Assyrian monarchs had to contend either at home or abroad.

Such are the principal grounds in favor of the truthfulness of our sacred history. The more they are dwelt upon, the more also they appear strong and convincing to the unbiased mind. Not indeed that they remove all obscurities or solve all difficulties connected with the history contained in our sacred records: obscurities and difficulties are to be found in historical works of the highest standing, and beside, seem inherent to our condition here below, for "we see now through a glass in a dark manner."[1] But they make us feel that since the Bible has proved itself reliable on countless points, sometimes in the most unexpected manner, and very often in regard to minute details simply mentioned in passing, it has a full right to be treated in as much consideration and honor as the works of Livy, Polybius and Tacitus, whose statements are relied on implicitly. Nay more, they even lead us to claim for our biblical history greater authority than for any other historical book, because it has stood the test of far more searching, because more unfriendly, criticism. Finally, they should prompt us to recognize frankly and face confidently whatever difficulties still remain in connection with our sacred history, fully pursuaded that, in due time, a better understanding of the inspired words, or a greater knowledge derived

[1] I Cor. xiii, 12.

from the monuments, will vindicate the truthful character of the biblical records.

In concluding, we may truly say that the Bible is even more wonderful as a book of history, than as a book of literature. When contrasted with the ancient sacred literatures of India, Persia and China, it alone can be called historical. When compared with the histories of Greece and Rome, it appears much their superior both in regard to the extent of ground it covers, and in regard to the importance of the events it records. For centuries, it was the only work giving us detailed information concerning the old countries, beliefs, customs, etc., of the East, and when it ceased to be our only witness to by-gone ages and civilizations, when ruins of temples and palaces, papyri and wall-inscriptions and paintings, bricks and clay tablets and cylinders, came to light again and bore testimony to the same customs and events as our sacred books, the Bible proved all the more valuable as a record of ancient history. Its account of great facts of the past, of Eastern customs and manners, of minute details of geography, etc., having thenceforth a full chance of being tested, has been recognized accurate on countless points, and must therefore be regarded as a historical work of the highest standing. Thus has it come to pass, that in the eyes of the unbiassed student of history at the close of the xixth century, the historical data contained in the Bible, have a full right

to be considered as the solid basis for the great claim which the true religion has ever made, viz.: to have its roots in the region of fact, to be, in the strict sense of the word, historical.

LECTURE III.

THE DOGMATIC TEACHING OF THE BIBLE.

"To be ignorant of the Scripture
is not to know Christ . . . . . .
"A man who is well grounded in the testimonies
of the Scripture is the bulwark of the Church."—*St. Jerome.*

SYNOPSIS OF LECTURE III.

The Dogmatic Teaching of the Bible.

I. The Bible, a Doctrinal Book:

1. Its Contents and Object essentially Doctrinal.
2. Its Form different from that of our
   - Dogmatic Treatises.
   - Catechetical Works.

II. The Principal Doctrines Contained in the Bible.

1. Briefly Stated, regarding
   - God and His principal Attributes.
   - The World (visible and invisible.)
   - Man (Origin; primitive state of Innocence; Moral Nature.)
   - Sin (The Fall and its Consequences; Remission of Sin.)
   - The Chosen People (Selection and Mission.)
   - The Messias: His Person, Mission and Kingdom.
   - The Church of Christ.
   - The Future Life.
2. Gradually Developed:
   - Several Stages of Development may be admitted.
   - Origin of the Elements gradually added.
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3. Compared with the Beliefs found in the Sacred Books of Ancient Nations.

Concluding Remarks.

LECTURE III.

The Dogmatic Teaching of the Bible.

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of the Scripture is the bulwark of the Church."—*St. Jerome.*

As far as we can go back in the history of Christian thought, we find the Bible considered as a treasury of heavenly doctrine. It was this aspect of Holy Writ which gave to the Sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament their paramount importance in the eyes of St. Matthew, St. Paul, and the other early preachers of Christianity bent on proving that all the things predicted therein of the Messias, had been fulfilled in the Person and work of Jesus. It was this aspect also which made the great Fathers and theologians of the Church look upon the use of the inspired books of both Testaments as a most valuable means for rearing, defending and developing a system of revealed belief. Finally, it was this same view of Holy Writ, which led Pope Leo XIII, to cite in his Encyclical "*On the Study of the Scripture,*" the words of St. Jerome quoted above, as a

proof that the Bible is of the greatest help in the teaching of Christian doctrine. It is only right therefore that we should dwell in one of the present Lectures, on this important aspect of the Bible.

I. When we study our sacred writings from the standpoint of their dogmatic bearing, we are not long before realizing, that they make a doctrinal book. A large number of them, such as the Psalms and the entire Wisdom literature of the Old Testament (viz.: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticle of Canticles, Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus), together with the Epistles of the New Covenant, are so entirely didactic in their contents and purpose, that they are usually considered as falling under the special head of the didactic or doctrinal books of the Bible. Hardly less obvious is the same doctrinal object in the prophetical writings: a feature all the more natural in them, because Hebrew prophets were entirely devoted to the one great purpose of keeping in its purity, the exalted belief and holy worship of Israel. Nor can it be doubted that a similar religious object should be recognized in the remaining, that is the historical, books of the Bible. This is manifestly the case with our Evangelical records, the dogmatic bearing of which is granted by all; and it can be easily shown that this is the case also with most of the historical writings of the Old Testament. Sometimes compiled in prophetical circles, often made up of passages from prophetical sources, almost invariably composed under the influence of the prophetical teachings, all

such historical works may naturally be expected to share in the doctrinal character of the writings of the prophets themselves. In point of fact, whoever examines closely such books as those of Moses, of Judges, of Kings, etc., will soon notice that the facts enlarged upon, the details selected, the manner in which they are grouped and appreciated, etc., bespeak on the part of the historians the aim to inculcate upon their readers something which they value far more than the events which they record, viz.: the great truths of the Jewish religion. Indeed, in the whole Bible, there is scarcely a book, the doctrinal interest of which,—despite the prominence of its particular literary or historical purpose,—cannot be pointed out almost as readily as that of the religious poetical works of Dante or Milton, the *Discours sur l'Histoire universelle* of Bossuet, or the more modern literary compositions of Mrs. Ward or Dr. Barry. So that when we look at the Bible as a whole, from this doctrinal standpoint, we may justly apply to it what St. Paul said in connection with the Scriptures of the Old Testament: "All Scripture inspired of God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice."[1] In other words our sacred volume is not merely an excellent manual of literature or history, it is pre-eminently a doctrinal book.

Had we then to view the Holy Bible simply from the standpoint of its dogmatic contents and object, we would naturally liken it to the dogmatic treatises

[1] II Tim. iii, 16.

studied as text-books in our theological seminaries, or the larger catechetical works used in our Sunday-schools and academies. But while like these doctrinal books, the Bible aims at imparting religious instruction, and in fact imparts it very effectively, it does so in quite a different form. In vain, for instance, would we look in our sacred writings for anything like the familiar questions and answers of our catechisms, for their abstract terms, and even for the formal examples and comparisons which are met with in our larger catechetical works. In vain too, would we seek in Holy Writ, those precise statements of doctrine, strict reasonings, technical expressions, and systematic connection of parts, which enter into the very substance of our theological treatises, and which give them the appearance of ordinary scientific works on physics or mathematics. Let any one contrast the manner in which the great dogma of Creation is taught in the opening chapter of Genesis and in our catechisms or other dogmatic books, and he will soon realize that the pedagogic features of our doctrinal works which have just been described, are entirely foreign to the method of teaching adopted by the sacred writers. Instead of that precise, abstract, and as it were, Greek, manner of teaching the creation of the world by God, which we find in our Western doctrinal works, the Eastern book, that is called the Bible, substitutes a concrete, descriptive and apparently unscientific picture of God speaking the word, and of the various classes

of creatures coming into being at His voice. In like manner, the fall of our first parents, the justice, providence, and other attributes of God, the forgiveness of sin, etc., etc., are truths taught explicitly in both our sacred records and in our modern doctrinal books, but in a very different form. While the method of the latter is abstract, scientific, and in so far, less within the comprehension of uncultivated minds, that of the former is concrete, popular, and adapted not only to the trained intellect of the scholar, but also to the undeveloped mental faculties of the child, and to the concrete ways of thinking natural to the masses of both the East and the West.

II. Among the many truths which the Bible brings thus down to the level of the ordinary mind, those which concern God and His principal attributes are described in a particularly happy manner. To strengthen man's belief in the existence of a personal God, the sacred writings declare emphatically that only he who is destitute of sense, can deny the existence of the Almighty:

> The fool said in his heart:
> "There is no God."[1]

The argument they appeal to in favor of the existence of God, is the one which will ever appear most striking and convincing to the human mind, viz.: that drawn from the order and beauty of the universe: "All men are vain in whom there is not

[1] Ps. xiii, 1.

the knowledge of God, and who through these good things that are seen, gained not power to know Him that is, neither by giving heed to the works did they recognize who was the artificer . . . . . For the first author of beauty made all those things . . . . . They are not to be excused, for if they were able to know so much as to explore the course of things, how did they not rather find out the Lord thereof?"[1] And it is this same argument which the royal prophet puts in a more concise, but equally forcible form, when he says:

> The Heavens show forth the glory of God,
> And the firmament declareth the work of His hands.[2]

With no less power and accuracy, the principal perfections of the Godhead, are pointed out in our sacred literature. "God is a Spirit,"[3] and as such, altogether beyond the ken of the eyes of mortal men: "Thou canst not see Me: for man shall not see Me and live."[4] In contrast to all creatures, He is immutable and eternal:

> In the beginning, O Lord, Thou foundedst the earth,
> And the heavens are the work of Thy hands.
> They shall perish, but Thou remainest.
> And all of them shall grow old like a garment,
> And as a vesture Thou shalt change them,
> And they shall be changed:
> But Thou art always the self-same,
> And Thy years shall not fail.[5]

[1] Wisdom xiii, 1 sqq.; see also Rom. i, 19, 20.
[2] Ps. xviii, 1.
[3] John iv, 24.
[4] Exodus xxxiii, 20.
[5] Ps. ci, 26–28; Heb. i, 10–12.

He is not to be thought of as bounded by the limitations of space: "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord;"[1] nor is He to be considered as one having but an imperfect knowledge, for: "The eyes of the Lord are far brighter than the sun, beholding round about all the ways of men, and the bottom of the deep, and looking into the hearts of men, into the most hidden parts. For all things were known to the Lord before they were created; so also after they were perfected. He beholdeth all things."[2] He is the mighty Maker of all creatures:

> He spoke, and they were made:
> He commanded and they were created;[3]

and by the same infinite power, he preserves them all in existence: "Seeing it is He who giveth to all, life, and breath, and all things."[4] His will is a real power of self determination, for time and again we contemplate him deliberating,[5] resolving,[6] commanding or forbidding, freely doing certain things and omitting others, etc.[7] He is a God of holiness: "I am Jehovah, your God: be holy, because I am holy."[8] "But according to Him that hath called you, who is holy, be you also in all manner of conversation, holy."[9] However mysterious

[1] Jerem, xxiii, 24.
[2] Ecclesiasticus xxiii, 28, 29; see also, Ps. cxxxviii, 1–18.
[3] Ps. xxxii, 9.
[4] Acts xvii, 25.
[5] Gen. I, 26.
[6] Gen. vi, 7.
[7] Cfr. Ephes. i, 4, 9, 11; Rom. xii, 2.
[8] Leviticus, xi, 44, 45.
[9] I Petr. i, 15, 16.

His ways with the sons of men, He is supremely just:

> Thou art just, O Lord,
> And Thy judgment is right.[1]
>
> Thou wilt render to every man
> According to his works.[2]

Few divine attributes are praised oftener than the mercy of the Lord "which endureth forever;[3] which "extendeth upon all flesh;"[4] which makes Him "compassionate, long-suffering and plenteous in mercy,"[5] etc., etc. His goodness is likewise often extolled in the books of the Old Testament, "Give glory to the Lord, for He is good;"[6] but it is only in those of the New, that it is described in all its sublimity: "God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son;"[7] and "God is charity."[8] Finally, "the truth of the Lord" is declared "to remain forever,"[9] and should be relied upon not simply in connection with His revealed word, but also in reference to the constancy of the order of nature: "All the days of the earth, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, night and day, shall not cease."[10]

All the various perfections of the true God are distinctly and beautifully set forth in the following

[1] Ps. cxviii, 137.
[2] Ps. lxi, 13, see also, Matt. xvi, 27.
[3] Ps. cv, 1; etc.
[4] Ecclesiasticus xviii, 12.
[5] Ps. ciii, 8.
[6] Ps. cv. 1; etc.
[7] John iii, 16.
[8] I John iv, 8.
[9] Ps. cxvi, 2.
[10] Gen. viii, 22.

prayer of Nehemias, which the second book of the Machabees[1] has preserved to us: "O Lord God, Creator of all things, dreadful and strong, just and merciful, who alone art the good King, who alone art gracious, who alone art just, and almighty and eternal, who delivereth Israel from all evil, who didst choose the fathers and sanctify them, receive the sacrifice for all thy people Israel . . . ." Their very union in the idea of the Godhead as unfolded in Holy Writ, makes it evident that the God of the Bible is a personal God, that is, has a real substantive existence and is absolutely different from inexorable fate, blind force or immutable law. In point of fact, this divine personality stands out very prominently in such biblical passages as: "I am the Lord;"[2] "I am who am . . . This is my name."[3] "I am the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon their children . . . . . and showing mercy unto thousands to them that love me and keep my commandments."[4]

Two very important doctrines embodied in the Scripture concerning God, have yet to be mentioned. The first is thus formulated: "Hear, O, Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord,"[5] and: "there is no God but one."[6] It is the great dogmatic truth of the unity of God, so emphatically and repeatedly taught in the books of the Old Testament, and no

[1] i, 24, sq.
[2] Gen. xv, 7; etc.
[3] Exodus iii, 14, 15.
[4] Exod. xx, 5, 6.
[5] Deuter. vi. 4.
[6] I Cor. vii, 4.

less distinctly and forcibly stated in the writings of the New Covenant. The second is embodied in these parting words of Jesus to His Apostles: "Going therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."[1] It is the mystery of three persons in one divine essence and nature: a doctrine which was withheld from the Old Testament believers, and had to be brought down to earth by "the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father."[2]

While the Bible contains so many valuable teachings concerning God and His attributes, it is comparatively silent about the vast universe of which we form a part. It has little or nothing to do with the wonderful phenomena of nature, beyond the description of their outward appearances, simply because it never was the object of the sacred writers to add to man's knowledge of the laws of the visible universe. On the other hand, and in pursuance of its own doctrinal purpose, it frequently speaks of the beginning and the end of the world. Its teachings concerning these two great questions the solution of which lies beyond the range of reason and experience, may be briefly stated as follows. There was a time when nothing of all that we see, existed. The universe was not yet; but God was, and His infinite power accounts for its production. This is the plain teaching of the opening words of the first book of

[1] Matt. xxviii, 19. [2] John i, 18.

the Old Testament: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth;"[1] and it is the great truth by means of which, as we learn from our last book of the Old Covenant, the mother of the Machabees exhorted her youngest son to martyrdom: "I beseech thee, my son," said she, "look upon heaven and earth, and all that is in them, and consider that God made them out of nothing: so fear not this executioner . . . ."[2]

Beside inculcating repeatedly the same doctrine (See, for instance, Acts xvii, 24; Ephes. iii, 9), the New Testament states explicitly that the act of creation extended to "all things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominations, or principalities or powers:"[3] so that the spirit-world must also be included among the creatures of the Almighty. It is likewise from the New Testament alone, that we learn something concerning the end of the world. "Heaven and earth," that is the visible universe as we know it, "shall pass."[4] It shall come to end through a conflict of the various powers of nature which will entail a universal conflagration: "The heavens and earth which are now . . . . are reserved unto fire against the day of judgment . . . . in which the heavens shall pass away with great violence and the elements shall be melted with heat, and the earth and the works

[1] Gen. I, 1.
[2] II Mach. vii, 28.
[3] Colos. i, 16.
[4] Matt. v, 18; xxiv, 35.

which are in it shall be burnt up."[1] Such a tremendous calamity, however, will not result in the total and eternal destruction of the world, but rather in a renewed and improved condition of all things: "But we look for new heavens and a new earth, according to His (Christ's) promises, in which justice dwelleth."[2]

Regarding man, the noblest of God's visible creatures, the Bible has much more to say than about the world itself. His first appearance upon the earth is regarded as an event which claimed special attention on the part of the Almighty: "Let us make man to our image and likeness,"[3] and is described more carefully than the production of any other creature: "The Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth; and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul."[4]

Thus is man's whole nature—body and soul—ascribed to the creative power of God, yet in a different manner as regards the two parts of which it is made up: while the soul comes directly from God, the body is derived from pre-existing material. Thus also are the great difference and superiority of the soul of man clearly suggested; a difference and superiority which we find explicitly defined in such passages of the New Testament as the following: "Fear ye not them that kill the body and are not

[1] II Petr. iii, 7, 10; see also, I Cor. iii, 13 sqq.
[2] II Petr. iii, 13.
[3] Gen. i, 26.
[4] Gen. ii, 7.

able to kill the soul; but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body into hell."[1] "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what can a man give that is of equal value to his soul?"[2]

After the creation of Eve, "the helpmate" of the first man, and "the mother of all the living,"[3] for God "made of one, all mankind,"[4] the inspired writings tell us of the primitive state of our first parents. They describe it as a state of innocence and happiness very different from the condition which unbelievers have dreamt of in connection with the first ancestor of our race. Thus we read of Adam as different in kind from all the brute creation;[5] as one endowed with articulate speech,[6] and fully able to "dress and keep" the garden of Eden;[7] and again, as one not knowing evil,[8] but enjoying peace of conscience and holding converse with God.[9] Bodily sufferings and painful labor are unknown to him, and physical death is as yet only the possible punishment of his future disobedience.[10] He is truly the King set by God over all creation,[11] and as he is endowed with a moral nature, it depends on him to comply with the divine command which has been signified to him.

[1] Matt. x, 28.
[2] Matt. xvi, 16.
[3] Gen. ii, 18, iii, 20.
[4] Acts xvii, 26.
[5] Gen. ii, 20.
[6] Gen. ii, 23.
[7] Gen. ii, 15.
[8] Gen. iii, 5.
[9] Gen. ii, 19; iii, 7 sqq.
[10] Gen. ii, 17; iii, 16 sqq.
[11] Gen. i, 26 sqq.

It might have been supposed that the first man appreciating this state of primitive innocence, and all the blessed features connected therewith, would have preserved it at any cost. It should be borne in mind, however, that, like one who has ever possessed excellent health, and has never witnessed suffering and death, Adam could not realize by way of contrast the full extent of his bliss, while the continual enjoyment of lawful pleasure would make him open to the temptation of adding to his present felicity a further gratification, though this one he knew to be forbidden. Be this as it may, Holy Writ tells us that in point of fact, when time came for him to freely choose between compliance with the positive will of his Maker and the attraction of pleasure forbidden, he deliberately broke the law that had been laid upon him, and thus introduced Sin into the world.[1] Through this transgression of the divine command, man's nature fell in its head and first representative from the high estate to which it had been raised by God's goodness and power, and lost thereby all the privileges it would have possessed forever, had Adam persevered in his condition of original righteousness. Henceforth sufferings of every description to be terminated by death, shall accompany human nature wherever found.[2] Henceforth too, the proneness to evil transmitted together with it, will make man's road to truth and moral

[1] Gen. iii, 1–6; Rom. v, 12.
[2] Gen. iii, 16 sqq.; Rom. v, 12 sqq.

goodness so difficult that it will cause St. Paul to speak of "a law in his members, fighting against the law of his mind, and captivating him in the law of sin that is in his members," and to exclaim: "Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"[1] Moreover the children of Adam in inheriting from him that human nature which had rebelled against God will share also in its sinfulness, so that each one may apply to himself these words of the Psalmist:

> Behold I was begotten in iniquity,
> And in sin did my mother conceive me.[2]

It is this doctrine of inborn sinfulness or of original sin, as it is usually called, which St. Paul teaches explicitly when he says: "By one man (Adam) sin entered into this world, and by sin death, and so death passed upon all men, in whom (in the Greek: for that) all have sinned;"[3] but which nevertheless, as indeed according to the testimony of right reason, should not be understood as implying the total depravity of the unregenerated man. In the Apostle's time, as in the present day, unbaptized men are able to know by the light of mere natural reason God and His principal attributes, and are in duty bound to pay Him a pure worship;[4] in point of fact, "the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things that are of the law . . . . are a

[1] Rom. vii, 23, 24.
[2] Ps. l, 7.
[3] Rom. v, 12.
[4] Rom. i, 18–21.

law to themselves . . . . their conscience bearing witness to them, and their thoughts between themselves accusing or also defending one another."[1] Thus then, after the fall, man remains an intelligent being, a free agent, able to do some naturally good works; yet, he needs God's special intervention to restore him to that higher, that is supernatural, plane of goodness to which he had been raised, and from which he fell, in Adam. This is why, right after the fall,[2] a Redeemer was promised to our first parents, who, according to the language of St. Paul, will be a "second Adam," for in him and through him, this restoration shall be effected.

But even before the coming of that Redeemer, sin could be remitted to man, provided it was sincerely repented of:

A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit;
A contrite and humbled heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.[3]

It was actually forgiven to King David, for we read, that, after the sorrowful exclamation: "I have sinned against the Lord!" the prophet Nathan said to him: "The Lord hath taken away thy sin."[4] Nor is this forgiveness to be thought of otherwise than a true destruction of sin, for this is plainly the meaning of the Psalmist, when he says:

According to Thy great mercy, blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.[5]

[1] Rom. ii, 14, 15. [2] Genesis iii, 15. [3] Ps. l, 19.
[4] II Kings, xii, 13. [5] Ps. l, 3, 4.

and that of the prophet Micheas,[1] who speaks of God "casting all our sins into the bottom of the sea," when He forgives them for His great mercy. Nor is this true remission of sin to be regarded as so entirely a divine act, that the true power of remitting sin cannot be entrusted to man. This was indeed the view of the Jewish contemporaries of Christ, who after Jesus had said to the paralytic: "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee," exclaimed: "Who is this who speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" But Our Lord showed it to be erroneous, healing the paralytic as a proof "that the son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins."[2] Yes, even as man, living on earth, the Son of God had power of remitting sins; and it is this same power which He imparted to His disciples, saying: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them."[3] Man's sins are so many debts to the divine Majesty,[4] and which the Almighty can remit by Himself indeed, but also by means of His representatives.

As time went on the consequences of the fall appeared worse and worse among the children of men. Despite the light of their reason and the voice of their conscience, despite also the faint traces of the primitive traditions which still lingered far and wide, the various peoples and tribes of the earth forgot the true God and gave themselves up to the

[1] vii, 19.
[2] Luke v, 20–24.
[3] John xx, 23.
[4] Matt. vi, 12; xviii, 22 sqq.

worship of idols. It was precisely at the time when the knowledge and service of their Creator was fast disappearing from among men, that God selected Abraham to be the great ancestor of His chosen people. He separated him from his kindred; and out of his descendants formed a nation peculiarly His own, because He delivered it from the Egyptian bondage and entered with it into a special covenant,[1] which was to last until the new covenant foretold by Jeremias[2] should be established.[3]

In thus selecting the children of Israel for His people, God intended that they should be to Him "a priestly Kingdom and a holy nation."[4] As a Kingdom of priests, it was their mission to preserve the knowledge and worship of the true God, and as a holy nation, they were in duty bound to keep themselves separate from the wicked influence of the pagan world. They rightly considered themselves as the guardians of "the Oracles of God,"[5] and as the nation out of which salvation was to be extended to the Gentiles.[6]

It was all through His chosen people, that God kept alive the hope of the Messias or Redeemer of the world. This Messianic hope originated in the general promise of deliverance made after the fall,[7] and up to the Babylonian captivity, was gradually

[1] Cfr. Exod. xiv, 4–8; Deuter. vii, 6; xiv, 2; etc.
[2] xxxi, 31 sqq.
[3] Cfr. Hebr. viii, 12.
[4] Exod. xix, 6.
[5] Rom. iii, 2; I Mach. xii, 9.
[6] Gen. xii, 3; Isai. ii, 3; John iv, 22.
[7] Gen. iii, 15.

developed and made to designate a person invested with characteristics in harmony with the aspirations of the times. Thus to Abraham, the Messias was promised as a source of blessings for all nations;[1] to Juda, as a great chieftain;[2] to Moses, as the author of a new dispensation.[3] Under the kings, he was described as a monarch whose holy rule should extend over all nations,[4] and also as many believe, as a mysterious sufferer, who, by dying, should atone for the sins of the people.[5] In the canonical books written during and after the Exile in Babylon, we find new and still more distinct features of the Messias delineated; the appellations of "Son of Man,"[6] of "desired of all nations"[7] are applied to Him; the priestly and royal offices are represented as combined in His person;[8] and in the book of Wisdom[9] there is a vivid description of the persecutions which "the true Son of God" would have to undergo at the hands of his contemporaries.

These, and other such predictions concerning the Messias were fulfilled in the life and character of Jesus, the son of David, who accepted the title of "the Messias"[10] and "the Son of Man;"[11] who described His mission as that of redeeming the world,"[12] and performed the miracles expected of the

[1] Gen. xxii, 17, 18.
[2] Gen. xlix, 10.
[3] Deuter. xviii, 18.
[4] II Kings, vii, 11–16.
[5] Ps. xxi; Isai. liii.
[6] Dan. vii, 13.
[7] Aggeus, ii, 8.
[8] Ps. cix.
[9] II, 11–20.
[10] John iv, 25, 26.
[11] John i, 51.
[12] Matt. xx, 28; I John, ii, 2.

Messias at his coming.[1] He was in truth born a King,[2] but as He declared, as indeed it was manifest, that His "Kingdom was not of this world,"[3] His wordly-minded contemporaries refused to recognize Him as the powerful deliverer of the Jewish people they have dreamt of, and put Him to death because He solemnly proclaimed Himself the true Son of God.[4] But God raised Him from the dead as had been foretold by Christ Himself,[5] and by the prophets of old,[6] thus making it known to "all the house of Israel most certainly, that God hath made both Lord and Christ, this same Jesus whom they have crucified,"[7] so that "there is no salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved."[8]

It is true that when Jesus ascended into heaven, it must have been difficult to see how He had really founded that Messianic Empire, which according to Old Testament predictions, was to include all nations.[9] And yet, the foundation of His Church was an accomplished fact. During His mortal life, he had selected and trained His apostles for the continuation of His own mission and the spread of the Kingdom of God here below, and after His visible departure, it was in and through them, that He was

[1] Luke, vii, 22; John vii, 31.
[2] Mark xv, 2.
[3] John xviii, 36 sq.
[4] Luke xii, 71; Mk. xiv, 61, 62.
[5] Matt. xvi, 21; etc.
[6] Acts ii, 24–32.
[7] Acts ii, 36.
[8] Acts iv, 12.
[9] Cfr. Acts i, 6.

to make the religious conquest of the world.[1] Hardly, in fact, had He left the earth, when the one whom He had made the supreme visible head of that church,[2] intrusting to his pastoral care both the sheep and the lambs, the whole flock of Christ,[3] Peter, began to teach, govern, and exercise judicial authority.[4] Peter was the one centre of that visible church which all must enter as the one true fold of Christ,[5] and from allegiance to which, no one, whether a private individual or a nation, can ever be allowed to depart, because Christ always remains with His Church,[6] and that church is "the pillar and the ground of the truth."[7] The apostles may die, but the church is built to last to the end of the world, governed by their lawful successors in the pastoral ministry,[8] and intrusted with the sanctification of all men by the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments.[9] This does not imply, however, that all the members or even rulers of that great religious organization will be faithful to the grace of God, for in point of fact, Christ speaks of His Kingdom as made up of both the good and the bad,[10] at times governed by men who

[1] Cfr. John xx, 21; Matt. xxviii, 19, 20; Acts i, 8; etc.
[2] Cfr. Matt. xvi, 18, 19; John xxii, 32.
[3] Cfr. John xxi, 15 sqq.
[4] Acts i, 15 sqq.; ii, 14 sqq.; v, 1 sqq.
[5] Cfr. John x, 16; Galat. i, 18.
[6] Cfr. Matt. xxviii, 20.
[7] I Tim. iii, 15.
[8] Cfr. Acts xx, 28; Titus i, 5 sqq.
[9] Titus iii, 5.
[10] Cfr. Matt. xiii, 21 sqq.

prove unworthy of their trust.[1] But it necessarily implies that down to the end of times, the Christian Church founded on Peter's rock, that is on the infallible teaching of the vice-gerent of Christ, will continue in the world the divinely-intrusted mission of instructing and sanctifying souls.

Of the many truths committed to the safe-keeping of the church, one claims here a special notice, on account of its great bearing on man's moral life, and also on account of the amount of attention it has attracted in our century. We refer to the belief in a future life, in favor of which the Church of Christ has ever offered to the world a convincing proof in the historical fact that Jesus arose from the dead.[2] As Christ arose from the sepulchre, so shall we one day arise ourselves, for He is "the first-fruits of them that sleep."[3] He arose, and was "crowned with glory and honor for the suffering of death;"[4] and we too shall meet with a return for "our deeds in the body," "according to the just judgment of God who will render to every man according to his work."[5]

This plain teaching of the New Testament regarding the life beyond the grave, is likewise found in the books or parts of books of the Old Covenant which contain the later doctrine of the Jews regarding the survival of the soul. Thus in the second

[1] Cfr. Luke xii, 42-46. [2] I Cor. xv, 3–23.
[3] I Cor. xv, 20. [4] Hebr. ii, 9.
[5] Rom. ii, see also, II Cor. v, 10; Matt. xvi, 27.

book of the Machabees,[1] we read of Judas Machabeus "thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection, for if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead." In like manner, in the narrative of the martyrdom of the seven Machabees,[2] we not only find mention of a future life, but also of the retribution which the just Judge will meet out to both the persecuted and the persecutors. Again, it cannot be doubted that in Isaias[3] there is question of a personal resurrection of the just.

When, on the contrary, we go farther back into the Scriptures of the Old Testament, we do not find the belief in a future life expressed with the same clearness and precision. We read indeed of the *Sheol*, a Hebrew word which is usually rendered by *hell* in our Catholic translation of Holy Writ,[4] but which conveyed to the Jewish mind only the idea of a shadowy and dismal survival of the dead in the underworld. Again, the old patriarchs when dead, are said repeatedly to be "gathered to their people;" but this expression may be taken in many cases, as meaning little more than the union of their remains together with those of their kindred in the same sepulchral cave,[5] and we never find in the

[1] xii, 43. [2] II Machab. vii, 9, 11, 13, 31 sqq.

[3] xxvi, 19. This passage is commonly regarded by Biblical scholars as later in date than the time of the prophet Isaias.

[4] Ps. vi, 6; Job xiv, 13, etc.

[5] Cfr. Gen. xxv, 8; etc.

Law of Moses the least mention of the rewards or punishments in the next life as a sanction of the moral law. Gradually, however, a more distinct idea of the survival of the departed, prevailed in Israel, as we infer from the fact that Saul asked the witch of Endor to call up for him the prophet Samuel dead sometime before.[1]

The gradual development which has just been noticed in connection with the doctrine of a future life in the writings of the Old Testament, is also perceived in reference to several other points of religious belief among the Jews. This is clearly the case with the Messianic hope, the doctrine of original sin, the conception of the mission of God's chosen people, etc., and with many other truths which were only gradually unfolded in harmony with the circumstances of time and place, for the method of revelation before Christ's coming was unquestionably a method of education. "The Law," that is the Old Testament dispensation, was a "pedagogue" for the Jews, pointing more and more distinctly to Christ and training them by slow degrees in view of His coming.[2] Even in connection with the New Testament revelation, something of the same gradual process of teaching was, as it were, necessary on account of the unprepared frame of mind of the Jews at large, and of the apostles in particular. This explains how it came to pass that Jesus beginning to impart higher views respect-

[1] I Kings xxviii, 11 sqq. [2] Cfr. Gal. iii, 23–25.

ing the kingdom, person, work, etc., of the Messias, deemed it advisable to suggest them in the form of parables rather than to teach them in explicit terms, and how He went slowly about making known His coming passion and death to His chosen twelve. In point of fact, but shortly before His departure from them, Our Lord said to His apostles: "I have many things yet to say to you; but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth is come, he will lead you into all the truth,"[1] and we know that even after His ascension and the descent of the Holy Ghost, these same apostles, needed yet a special revelation to understand the divine designs regarding the mutual relations of Jews and Gentiles in the Church, the new kingdom of God.[2]

Thus then, when we study the leading doctrines contained in the Bible, we should never lose sight of the fact that in regard to them, several stages of development must be, as indeed they are generally, admitted. From time to time, new instalments of religious beliefs were made by God chiefly through His prophets, His special messengers, and ultimately through His beloved Son: for "God who at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days, hath spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things."[3] New

[1] John xvi, 12 sq.
[2] Cfr. Acts x, 13 sqq., 28, 47; xi, 5, 17 sqq.
[3] Hebr. i, 1, 2.

truths were imparted to men by the prophets, who spoke in the name of Jehovah, saying: "Thus saith the Lord," and finally, by the very Son of God, whom all men must "hear" and obey no less implicity than Moses, the institutor of the Old Covenant.[1] Together with this direct manner of gradually adding elements to the doctrines already revealed, we may readily admit that more distinct aspects of old beliefs could be discovered by the religious authorities in Israel, and by the inspired mind of so great a thinker as St. Paul, for instance, in the New Testament times: under the guidance of Providence, and under the pressure of circumstances, all such authorized teachers of the people of God could be led into a fuller conception of religious truth, and thus contribute to the doctrinal development among the Jews and the early Christians. Finally, we can easily conceive how the contact of the Jewish people in particular, with either Egypt, Babylonia, or Persia, could be in the designs of God, a means to prepare the mind of the Hebrews for receiving doctrines already possessed by these pagan nations, but thus far withheld, for special reasons, from the chosen people. Of course, all such new doctrines, or new aspects of old beliefs, could become part and parcel of the doctrinal teaching of the Bible, only after they had been approved by God and had been brought under the special influence of Inspiration.

[1] Cfr. Deuter. xviii, 18, 19; Matt. xvii, 5; Hebr. iii, 1–12.

However all this may be, one thing remains beyond question, viz: that the dogmatic teaching of the sacred books of the Old Covenant reached its culmination in the theology of the New Testament. This theology naturally centers in the person, character and work of Jesus, the Son of Man and the Son of God, and there is no doubt that in Him and through Him, both the ignominious and glorious features of the Messias, which so repeatedly meet us in Old Testament prophecy, found a fulfilment unexpected by men, but intended by divine Providence. From the very beginning of Christianity, this was recognized as the fittest and highest completion of the expectations of the prophets and patriarchs of old; and in consequence, the first preachers of the Gospel rightly insisted on the fact that the Law had not been destroyed, but ennobled, when transformed into the Christian realities.[1] A new Covenant, higher in its institutor, wider in its application, but predicted by Jeremias,[2] was introduced, and all the believers in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, who followed the inspiration of divine grace, were drawn into the Church of Christ.[3]

In thus passing from the fold of Judaism into that of Christianity, Jewish converts not only felt that they preserved the leading doctrines of their old faith, such as the belief in one God and in His

[1] Cfr. Matt. v, 17; Acts iii, 17 sqq.; xiii, 29 sqq.; etc.
[2] xxxi, 31 sqq.
[3] Hebr. viii; Acts xiii, 48; xviii, 2–12.

principal attributes, in the fall of man and its various consequences, in the Messias, the future life, etc., but the more they pondered on the teachings of Christ as made known to them by the apostles, the more also they realized that these truths had reached a point of development which was at once their confirmation and extension. The goodness of God, for instance, was developed into a universal fatherhood in harmony with the idea of God, the Creator and Preserver of all; the Redemption of man in Christ appeared a mystery of mercy truly divine; the malice of sin was realized in a degree hitherto unsuspected when it was seen to have required for its atonement, the very death of the Son of God; the divine nature though still believed to be one, was revealed in its mysterious plurality of persons, faint traces of which could be discovered in "the Spirit of God" hovering over the waters at the beginning of the world,[1] and in the "Angel or Jehovah," apparently distinct from God the Father, and God the Holy Ghost, and yet represented as endowed with a divine character,[2] in the inspired writings of the Old Testament, etc.; etc.

But while the doctrines of the Old Testament must always appear greatly inferior when compared with those of the New Covenant, nevertheless they are far superior to the beliefs found in the sacred books of such ancient nations as China, India and Persia. While the inspired writings of the Old

[1] Gen. i, 2. [2] Cfr. Josue iii, 13–15; and vi, 2.

Law give to men most lofty views regarding the nature and infinite perfections of God, and constantly bring before them the highest ideal of moral goodness, the sacred books of China adhere strictly "to the level of the purely human, and avoid all reference to the divine to such an extent as to ignore and even mutilate the higher side of man's being and to deprive him of an ideal."[1] Again, our Old Testament Scriptures exhibit a gradual unfolding of religious truth concerning man's origin, present condition and future life, to which the great "Classics" of the Chinese, are utterly foreign. In fact, retrogression, not progress is the law of their beliefs, the oldest portions of the Chinese Scriptures being the noblest in thought and aspiration.

This "religious positivism which will not look at the divine"[2] and which places the sacred books of China on a level manifestly so inferior to those of the Old Testament, cannot indeed be objected to in connection with the religious writings of India, for the Hindu Scriptures are replete with teachings concerning the divine and the supernatural. But the low and depressive character of the sacred books of India is chiefly visible in their tenets concerning God. Their polytheism is "a polytheism of a very peculiar kind. There lay behind it, at its first formation, no conscious monotheism, no conception of a single supreme power, from whom man and nature,

[1] Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, art. Bible, p. 295.
[2] Hastings, ibid.

and all the forces in nature, have their origin. If we hold, as I believe we do right to hold, that God revealed Himself to the first parents of the human race as a single personal being, and so that all races of men had at the first this idea as an inheritance handed down to them traditionally from their ancestors, yet it would seem certain that in India, before the religion which we find in the Vedas (i. e. its sacred books) arose, this belief had completely faded away and disappeared; the notion of "God" had passed into the notion of "gods;" a real polytheism universally prevailed, even with the highest class of intellects; and when, in the course of time, monotheistic ideas showed themselves, they sprang up in individual minds as the results of individual speculation, and were uttered tentatively, not as doctrines, but as hypotheses, as timid guesses at truth, on the part of those who confessed that they knew little or nothing."[1] Viewed from this most important standpoint the Hindu religion will ever appear immeasurably below the Hebrew creed, the first article of which is: "Hear O Israel, the Lord thy God, is one Lord." And there is no doubt that in connection with several other doctrinal points, such for instance, as the necessity of atonement for sin, the existence of a future life, etc., the sacred books of India are also inferior in their teaching to those of Israel.

[1] G. Rawlinson, The Religions of the Ancient World, Chap. iv.—One cannot help noticing in this passage of a Protestant writer his distinct avowal that tradition is a providential means to keep up religious truth in the world.

As regards the religious beliefs contained in the ancient writings of the Persians, it must be said that in several respects, they appear hardly inferior to those which we have noticed in our inspired books of the Old Testament. This is the case for example, with their distinct and earnest teaching of the immortality of the soul, and of a conscious future existence during which departed souls may be helped by the prayers of their friends; with their belief in good and bad angels, spiritual beings inferior to the Godhead; with their absence of idolatrous representations of the divinity, and with their belief that man was created by a principle of good, to which he owes solemn recognition and faithful service. Yet, it cannot be denied that even the dogmatic teaching of the sacred books of Persia, which stands on so much a higher level than that either of the classical writings of China, or of the religious books of India, should be considered as considerably inferior to that of the Hebrew Bible in two most important respects. First, the belief of the ancient Persians in a spiritual deity is marred by the fact that they admit not one infinitely powerful, good and truly supreme God, but really two great Beings, the one all bountiful and wise, the other the all dark and malicious principle of evil; both of which are equally supreme, perpetually watching each other and seeking to battle and defeat each other, but none of which truly deserves the name of God. Secondly, as was noticed above in connection with the religious doc-

trines inculcated in the sacred books of China, the beliefs of the Persians went on deteriorating instead of gradually becoming higher and purer, and the worship of two immaterial principles was later on mingled with and practically transformed into the worship of the great elements of nature ; fire, air, the earth and water. Plainly we are again far from the pure Monotheism of Israel, far also from that law of progress the working of which purified more and more the doctrinal teachings of the Old Testament and finally brought them up to culmination in the theology of the New Covenant.

Of the many conclusions naturally suggested by the foregoing remarks, two deserve special notice. It is clear first of all, that when the dogmatic teaching of the Bible is considered as a whole, that is not simply in its initial stages of the Old Law, but in its culminating degrees in the New Covenant, it appears far more complete, pure and distinct that any system of doctrines that could be gathered from the sacred books of ancient nations. It alone, in fact, has a right to be considered as the religion which an all-wise and thrice-holy God ever intended and gradually brought about for his rational creatures. It alone can ever lay claim to a universal acceptance and hope actually to become the religion of mankind at large.

At the same time, and this is a second conclusion no less important and well-ascertained than the one

just mentioned, the dogmatic teaching of the Bible was never meant to be, and in point of fact never was, the only and supreme standard of belief. In the Old Testament dispensation, priests and prophets, levites and scribes had a divine mission to keep up the pure belief in Israel, and to preside over its regular development. In the New Testament the church is "the pillar and ground of the truth,"[1] and its ministers are the messengers of God, the authorized interpreters of His word. They have received the same mission of teaching mankind as had been intrusted to the very Son of God: "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you;[2] "He that heareth you, heareth Me, and He that despiseth you, despiseth Me; and He that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me;"[3] "Go therefore, teach ye all nations . . . . behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."[4]

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[1] I Tim. iii, 15.
[2] John xx, 21.
[3] Luke x, 16.
[4] Matt. xviii, 19, 20.

LECTURE IV.

MORALITY AND THE BIBLE.

"I have carefully and regularly perused these Holy Scriptures, and am of opinion that the volume independently of its Divine origin, contains more sublimity, purer morality, ... than can be collected from all other books in whatever language they may have been written."—*Sir William Jones.*

SYNOPSIS OF LECTURE IV.

MORALITY AND THE BIBLE.

I. The Moral Teaching of the Old Testament.

1. Importance of this Topic in the Present Day.
2. Leading excellent Features pointed out regarding
   - The Private Individual,
   - The Family and its Various Members.
   - Human Society
     - Authority; Lower Classes; Criminal Code.
   - Foreigners.
3. Principal Objections stated and examined:
   - Polygamy and Divorce.
   - Treachery of Individuals approved of.
   - Wars of Extermination prescribed.
   - Imprecatory Psalms.
   - Low Ideals in several Books.
4. Its Superiority to the Moral Teaching of other Ancient Religions.

II. The Moral Teaching of the New Testament.

1. It Continues, yet Improves the Moral Teaching of the Old Testament.
2. Its Superiority to the Ethical Teachings of Secularism.
3. Recent Objections to New Testament Morality, Stated and Disposed of.

Concluding Remarks.

LECTURE IV.

Morality and the Bible.

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These words of one of the best modern Orientalists are a remarkable tribute of praise to the morality contained in our sacred books. Deeply versed as he was in the Ancient and Eastern literature, he found nothing in them, either separately or conjointly, that could compare in this respect with our inspired writings, and he feared not to state this conclusion in spite of the flippant and even scoffing manner in which the English deists and French philosophers of his time, spoke of the Bible and its morality. In point of fact, all the truly scientific work that has been since carried out in the same field of labor, has shown more and more strikingly both the correctness of his views, and the unsoundness of those of his adversaries. And it is in the light of his conclusions, as well as of those of subsequent scholars, that we intend to examine briefly

in the present Lecture, first the Moral teaching of the Old, and next that of the New Testament.

I. Of the two parts which go to make up the Holy Bible, the Old Testament is unquestionably the one the morality of which has been more maliciously and more persistently assailed. During the last two centuries, its moral teaching has been time and again the object of covert and insidious attacks by a skilful waiving of its excellent features, and a misleading comparison of its real imperfections with only the good points of pagan systems of morality. Yea more, not a few times, it has been positively misrepresented by means of perverse insinuations, incorrect inferences, distorted interpretations of facts, etc., so as to turn it all the more easily into ridicule.

It may well be realized how these two methods of decrying the Old Testament morality, either applied separately or cleverly combined, especially when enhanced by the charms of a vigorous or graceful style, would gradually produce a deep and wide-spread impression among weak believers, that the moral teaching of the Old Law can hardly be cleared of the charges made against it. Indeed such a painful and unfortunate impression has but too often been confirmed in the minds of many, by the unskilful manner in which the arguments of their adversaries were met by the defenders of the Old Testament morality. For it cannot be denied that, time and again, these apologists, through

insufficiency of knowledge, lack of criticism, carelessness of statements, etc., have granted too much, or on the contrary too little, to their opponents.

Thus did it come to pass that both friends and enemies of the divine revelation contained in the books of the Old Covenant, contributed in their respective manner towards causing or increasing distrust in the minds of a large number of Protestants and even Catholics, with regard to the Old Testament morality. In fact, some faltering believers, rating the moral teaching of the Hebrew Scriptures, too much below the high standard of perfection set up in the New Testament writings, would fain consider the older part of the Bible as "Christianity's Millstone," and advocate either its being openly thrown aside as too heavy a burden for the Christian religion to carry, or its being quietly left unminded as in no way helpful to the moral guidance of Christian people.

Of course, feelings of this description are most unjust, as may readily be seen from the avowals of such an unbeliever as Renan, when he says: "The Jewish and Christian histories have been the delight of eighteen centuries, and . . . . are extraordinarily effective in the amelioration of morals;"[1] and of such an agnostic as Prof. Huxley, when he writes: "The Bible has been the Magna Charta of the poor and of the oppressed; down to modern times, no

[1] History of the People of Israel, Vol. i, Preface, p. xi (Engl. Transl.).

State has had a constitution in which the interests of the people are so largely taken into account; in which the duties, so much more than the privileges of the rulers, are insisted on, as that drawn up for Israel. . . . ."[1] Yet these same feelings clearly show how important it is for believers of the present day, to become more and more acquainted with the leading topics connected with the moral teaching found in our sacred books of the Old Covenant.

The first, and in many respects, foremost of these topics, concerns the many excellent features of the Old Testament morality, which, however numerous and important, are too often lost sight of by the very defenders of divine revalation. As regards, for instance, the condition of private individuals in the Hebrew community, it is worthy of notice that they all enjoyed equal civil rights and were so protected by law, that at no time, could any one tribe, any one man seize territory and thus leave the great majority of his fellows destitute of land-property. Again, the life of each citizen, was made sacred by every device;[2] his character effectively protected against calumny and false witness,[3] and his private property made secure to him by a distinct prohibition not only of the act, but also of the intention

[1] These words of Huxley are quoted by Farrar, *The Bible, its Meaning and Supremacy*, p. 268.

[2] Cfr. Numb. xxxv, 31, 32; Exod. xxi; Deuter. xxi, 1 sqq.; etc.

[3] Cfr. Exod. xxiii Deuter. xix, 15 sqq.; etc.

of stealing, and by a strict and ample restoration of stolen goods.[1]

If from the condition of the individual citizen we pass to that of the Hebrew family, we find that it likewise exhibits several features of excellence. The mother of the family,—to begin with her,—is never made the slave of bondage or toil, for the hardest work is always imposed upon men. She is the housekeeper, naturally inferior and obedient to her husband, yet admitted to his society as his real "helpmate," eating with him and communing with him. She is not constrained to go about her face concealed by a long and thick veil; she takes part in all public services, and if endowed by God with special gifts such as poetry, eloquence or prophecy, she can cultivate and exhibit them. In point of fact, as justly remarked by H. W. Beecher,[2] "unless the attention of the reader of the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testaments has been called to the matter in detail, he will scarcely think of women in conditions other than those in which they exist among us. Samuel's mother, Elizabeth, Mary and Martha, ... women such as these were honored in the old Hebrew commonwealth."

In every family, the life of children was held most precious, and the woman that was so cruel as to destroy her coming child was considered as more criminal than if she had murdered it after

[1] Cfr. Exod. xxii, 1 sqq.; etc.

[2] *Bible Studies*, p. 272 sq.

birth. The instruction of children was, of course, no easy task in the absence of books, schools and other such means of training; yet it could not be neglected altogether, for parents were bound to teach them the great events of national history, together with the statutes and ordinances of the God of Israel.[1] Further, children were made to look upon labor as honorable, and gradually taught a trade whereby they could secure an honest living, while they were brought up in the fear of the Lord, respect and love and obedience to their parents, courtesy towards all.

The father was indeed the head of the family, and, as such, the master and owner of his household. Nevertheless, his authority was far from absolute. He had, for instance, no direct power of life and death over his children,[2] and could not even disinherit his sons, although, in case of extreme indigence, he might sell his children, especially his daughters, into slavery, or surrender them to his creditors as a pledge.[3]

The selling of children into slavery, which has just been mentioned, should not be understood as entailing in their regard anything like a condition of perpetual servitude; for no Hebrew, of whatever age, could be thus made a slave for life, but was to be relieved from that painful condition, at the furthest, after six years.[4] Even in the case of

[1] Deuter. iv, 9–10; vi, etc.
[2] Cfr. Deuter. xxi, 18–21.
[3] Exod. xxi, 7.
[4] Exod. xxi, 2.

persons belonging to a race different from the people of God, the evils of slavery were very materially mitigated. At no time in Israel was it allowed to treat them as mere things or chattels, but they were all to be considered as equal to any of their fellow-men in their spiritual relations to God. They were freely admitted to all religious privileges, such as the rest of the Sabbath, the festivals, the sacrifices offered by the family, etc., and if they so chose, could be adopted into the Hebrew people by receiving circumcision. Moreover, as regards civil rights, they were always allowed to redeem themselves, and in case of maltreatment by their masters, were given their liberty by Jewish law. Finally, if ill-usage had practically compelled them to take to flight, they could not be reclaimed by their masters, there being no fugitive slave law to that effect.

Thus, then, the authority of the father and of the slave-holder was wisely restricted among the Hebrews, and this was also the case with all the officers of the State, for, as is well said by Prof. Huxley, whom we already quoted: "Down to modern times, no State has had a constitution in which the interests of the people are so largely taken into account; in which the duties, so much more than the privileges of the rulers, are insisted on as that drawn up for Israel." Whether high or low, all such public officers were only the representatives, natural or appointed, of the thrice-holy

God, who "accepteth no person nor taketh bribes, and doth judgment to the fatherless and the widow."[1]

It is this tender mercy of "the father of orphans and the judge of widows"[2] which we find reflected in the following divine commands: "When thou hast reaped the corn in thy field, and hast forgot and left a sheaf, thou shalt not return to take it away; but thou shalt suffer the stranger, and the fatherless and the widow to take it away. . . . If thou hast gathered the fruit of thy olive tree thou shalt not return to gather whatsoever remaineth on the trees; but thou shalt leave it for the stranger, for the fatherless and the widow. If thou makest the vintage of thy vineyard, thou shalt not gather the clusters that remain, but they shall be for the stranger, the fatherless and the widow."[3]

It is the same divine mercy toward the poor which inspired the following noble saying:

> He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord;
> And his good deed will He pay him again.[4]

and made it allowable in Israel for the starving indigent to satisfy their hunger when passing by the field, orchard or garden of the rich.[5]

As regards the working classes, Hebrew legislation was also most wise and considerate. Among

[1] Deuter. x, 18.
[2] Ps. lxvii, 6.
[3] Deuter. xxiv, 19–21.
[4] Prov. xix, 17.
[5] Deuter. xxiii, 24, 25.

its enactments we may particularly mention the positive command, that "the hire of the needy and the poor, whether he be a brother (Hebrew) or a stranger." . . . should not only "not be refused," but even should be paid "the same day" it was earned.[1] There was also, what may be called, a periodical bankrupt act, in the regulation that, every seventh year, debts not as yet settled, should be remitted,[2] thus making it impossible for poor men to become literally slaves to their creditors, under the pressure of constantly accumulating debts. Again, in the case of a loan on promise of repayment, the provisions of the Hebrew code were most human, when obligations could not be met; the creditor could not issue an execution, go in and pick out the best things he could find, etc.; but the man himself was allowed to offer what he could easiest spare.[3]

A similar spirit of humanity pervaded the criminal code of the Ancient Testament. No torture was resorted to in order to extort confession of crimes; no cruelty tolerated after the guilt had been proven, and the punishment of fathers did not entail that of their children. Death by stoning,—the national form of punishment,—is as easy as death by almost any other mode, for a sound blow on the head makes men unconscious of further suffering.

[1] Deuter. xxiv, 14, 15.
[2] Deuter. xv, 1 sqq.
[3] Deuter. xxiv, 6 sqq.

Finally, as may have been already noticed, foreign residents among the Hebrews must be treated with the same kind regard as the poor, the fatherless and the widow; they have the same right to glean after the harvest and the vintage, and the price of their labor must also be paid the day it is due to them. In fact, not only is there no oppressive discrimination ever made between the Hebrew and the foreigner, but the general principle is distinctly set forth: "One law shall be to him that is homeborn and to the stranger that dwelleth among you;" [1] and it is most explicitly stated that the Lord "loveth the stranger," and that His people should love him likewise.[2]

From the foregoing remarks it is plain that the moral teaching of the Old Testament, contains many of the noble features, which we would naturally look for in an excellent system of ethics, and which should ever make us consider it as a worthy forerunner of the ethical doctrines of the New Covenant. Serious charges, however, have been brought against it, and they must now briefly be stated and examined.

It is first objected that polygamy and divorce, which are so opposed to the vital interests of the family, were not prohibited by the Old Law. Polygamy, we are told, was freely practised by the ancient patriarchs, by the father of the prophet Samuel, etc., and only in the case of kings do we read of any restriction concerning the number of

[1] Exod. xii, 49. [2] Deuter. x, 18–19.

wives allowed. The laws regulating divorce, it is further claimed, were manifestly unjust, inasmuch as only the man could bring a petition for, and in fact, obtain a divorce from his wife, for any "shameful thing," a vague expression which became very loosely interpreted in the course of time.[1]

Of course, the evils resulting naturally from the practice of polygamy cannot be denied, and they are time and again described in Holy Writ under the form of family divisions, jealousies, etc.; yet they should be appreciated not from our own standpoint, but from that of the ancient Oriental views and customs. In those days the barrenness of a wife was a great misfortune and disgrace, and amply justified in the eyes of all, the taking of a second wife.[2] Further than this, the customs prevalent throughout the East had gradually caused it to be regarded as allowable to have several wives for anyone who could afford it; so that in practising polygamy, the ancient patriarchs and their descendants afterwards, simply viewed the matter from that standpoint, and acted accordingly. Finally, the evils of polygamy were really more limited among the Hebrews than one might be tempted at first to suppose: private citizens in ordinary circumstances, very seldom, if ever, had two wives, except in the case of the barrenness of their first wife, so that a positive restriction regarding the matter was felt necessary by the

[1] Cfr. Deuter. xxiv, 1; Matt. xix, 3.
[2] I Kings i, 1 sqq.

lawgiver of Israel, only in connection with kings, whose plenteous means could easily betray them into an extensive, and hence, more objectionable practice of polygamy.

Concerning divorce, our divine Lord expressly says that it was allowed to the Jews of old solely because of "the hardness of their heart,"[1] that is to avoid greater evils, and this disposes at once of the main difficulty drawn from its toleration. If we further bear in mind that the "shameful thing" considered by the Jewish Law as a sufficient ground for asking a divorce, was no doubt, a proved crime[2] and that the reason for which the man alone could petition for a divorce, was most likely that he alone could be supposed to proceed so far in his hatred as to take away the life, or otherwise maltreat, his consort, it will be easily seen that even the regulations regarding divorce, which appear most unjust at first sight, should not be considered as such in reality.

A second objection often urged against the Old Testament morality is drawn from the fact that the treacherous murder of enemies by private individuals is approved of in Holy Writ. The case most usually referred to in that connection, is the bloody deed of Jahel, the wife of Haber, who, having invited into her tent, Sisara, the defeated

[1] Matt. xix, 8.

[2] Cfr. Matt. v, 32. See also Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. ii, p. 333.

general of the enemies of Israel, put him to death during his sleep and thus violated the most elementary laws of hospitality.[1] The difficulty is not, however, with the conduct of Jahel, so much as with the manifest approval and even high praises of her deed contained in the canticle of Debbora and Barac, in the fifth chapter of the book of Judges.[2]

Many considerations of unequal value have been adduced by apologists to meet this difficulty. It has been said, for instance, that the canticle of Debbora did not intend *directly* to praise the act of Jahel, but simply to state a *fact*, namely that the wives of the nomad Arabs would undoubtedly regard Jahel as a public benefactress and praise her as a popular heroine.[3] But this is as lame an excuse as the supposition of the Rabbis that Sisara was slain by Jahel because he attempted to offer her violence, is groundless. Nor can we say, as has been affirmed by some, that the act of Jahel was done in obedience to a divine command; for of this command there is not the least hint in the narrative. Much nearer to the true solution of the case, would it be to say with St. Thomas Aquinas, that in such bloody deeds, the sacred writers commend not their evil features, but only their patriotic and therefore laudable aspect. Some think that the Canticle of Debbora is simply quoted in the sacred text just as

[1] Cfr. Judges iv, 11 sqq. [2] See Judges v, 24 sqq.
[3] Westcott, in Smith Bib. Dict., art. Jael.

it had been composed,[1] and that this quotation does not necessarily entail a positive divine approval of all its contents.

This lack of a positive divine approval of objectionable features in the Old Testament morality, is not usually appealed to in connection with the wars of extermination which our sacred books clearly describe as enjoined by Jehovah Himself. It is in the name "of the Lord of hosts," that the prophet Samuel bids Saul "go and smite Amalec and utterly destroy all that he hath; spare him not, nor covet anything that is his: but slay both man and woman, child and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass;"[2] and it is on account of his imperfect compliance with the divine command, that Saul is rejected by the Lord.[3] It is also according to a positive order of Jehovah, that the Hebrews are told that "of those cities (of Chanaan) that shall be given them, they shall suffer none at all to live;"[4] and that Josue destroys everything with the edge of the sword, during the conquest of Chanaan.[5]

In view of these, and other such passages, apologists of the moral teaching of the Old Testament freely admit that stern and exterminating war by divine command, does not in itself contravene the absolute principles of morality. They affirm that

[1] See Judges v, 1: "In that day, Debbora and Barac, son of Abinoem, sung and said."

[2] I Kings xv, 3.. [3] I Kings xv, 10 sqq.

[4] Deuter. xx, 16, 17. [5] Josue x, 28–40.

in cases of the kind, the Israelites simply did God's bidding, and carried out against corrupt nations, a just sentence which divine vengeance could have executed by means of the pestilence, the famine or the storm. But in reality they would find it difficult to set forth distinct and conclusive proofs of the utter corruption of the Amalecites, and even then the stern order to kill man, woman, child, suckling, nay even animals, seems in opposition not only to the higher morality of the Gospels, but even to the humanity of such a book as that of Jonas, where Jehovah declares: "Shall I not spare Ninive, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons that know not how to distinguish between their right hand and their left, and also much cattle?"[1] In point of fact, the ground given for the complete destruction of Amalec, is their armed opposition to Israel, when the latter were on their way to the Promised Land.[2] As regards the Chanaanites, it is true that their worship was most impure and dangerous for the children of Israel, and that it was very important on that account never to allow friendship to exist between the two races. Yet the ideas of humanity now prevailing revolt from such wholesale slaughter and devastation as we find prescribed in the name of the Lord, and what renders the solution of this difficulty still harder is the fact, that, as stated above, the Old Law represents

[1] Jonas iv, 11. [2] I Kings xv, 2.

human life as something most precious, and forbids the punishment of innocent children for the crimes of their parents.[1]

It should be borne in mind, however, that even this difficulty can be solved. It can still be maintained that since God is the supreme master of life and death, He could, without contravening the absolute principles of morality, issue such a sentence of extermination and have it carried out by whatever instruments he deemed fit in His wisdom. This appears all the more admissible, because, while, on the one hand, the order was in no way repugnant to the moral sense of the ancient Eastern nations, God certainly foresaw, on the other hand, that in point of fact, the extermination would hardly be carried out even to the extent desirable for the actual preservation of the true worship in Israel. Catholics and most Protestants agree in accepting this as the solution of the difficulty. It is true that it has been supposed that the ancient documents utilized by the sacred writers, spoke of the conduct of the people of Jehovah toward the enemies of their nation and of their God, in about the same manner as the recently discovered inscription of Moab, makes the Moabite King, Mesa, speak of the enemies of his nation and of his god. On the Moabite stone, Mesa says: "I fought against the city (Ataroth, of the tribe of Gad)

[1] See also the merciful conduct prescribed by Eliseus to the King of Israel, towards his captive Syrians in IV Kings vi, 21, 22.

and took it, and slaughtered all the men, to please Chamos, the god of Moab." "I took the town Nebo (from Israel), and put to the sword all its inhabitants, seven chiefs of the tribes . . . . the women and the children; for Chamos had uttered a curse against it." Hence, it has been suggested that both the sacred writings of the Old Testament, which embody ancient sources of information, and the Moabite stone which subsists down to the present day, simply bear historical witness to the conception of the ancient Eastern peoples, who considered themselves as the instruments of divine vengeance upon the enemies of their respective races. Such a suggestion, however, cannot claim to rest on any basis of tradition, and Catholics will be slow to accept it as the real solution of this most difficult question.

Hardly less difficult to many minds has it appeared to justify the morality of the Imprecatory Psalms, thus called from the fact that they contain not only denunciations of the wicked in general as the enemies of Jehovah, but also specific curses directed against private enemies with an appearance of personal malignity. The passages usually objected to in this connection are found in Pss. lviii, lxviii, cviii, cxxxvi, etc., and as a sample of these, we quote the following:

Give power to a wicked man over him,
And let Satan stand at his right hand! (that is, claim him for himself.)

When he is judged, let him go forth condemned,
And let his prayer be turned to sin!
May his children be few,
And let another seize his possessions!
Be his children fatherless,
And his wife a widow!
Be his children vagabonds and beggars,
And be they driven from their ruined homes!
Let the extortioner distrain all that he has,
And let strangers make spoil of his labor!
Let no one show mercy to him,
On his orphans let none take compassion!
May his posterity be cut off,
In the next generation, let their name be blotted out!
May the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with Jehovah,
And may not the sin of his mother be blotted out!

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

He delighted in curses,—let them strike him!
He took no joy in blessing,—let none light on him!
Let him clothe himself in curses, as with a garment;
May they soak into his entrails like water,
And like oil, into his bones!
Let them be to him like his usual garment,
And like the girdle he ever wears!
Be this the reward of my adversaries from Jehovah,
And of those who speak evil against me![1]

It cannot well be denied that passages like this, breathe a spirit of revenge altogether foreign to the spirit of meekness enjoined by Christianity.[2] It may also be admitted that they bear the marks of the ethical and religious imperfections of their authors, in about the same manner as the more or

[1] Ps. cviii, 6–20. [2] Cfr. Luke ix, 52–55.

less imperfect style noticeable in the various books of Holy Writ, betrays a corresponding lack of literary culture in the individual writers, or a general defective condition in the Hebrew or Greek of the time. But it is significant that these imprecations nowhere meet with a distinct divine approval, so that the spirit of revenge reflected therein may be conceived of as simply tolerated by God, or as one of those imperfect features of the Old Law which were ultimately bound to disappear. It is even not altogether improbable that, though they wrote as if giving vent to their feelings of personal revenge, the Psalmists really composed these, and other such, passages in the name of the Hebrew community whose national spirit of revenge with regard to public enemies, can hardly be condemned even from the higher standard of Christian morality. This view is in fact, in perfect harmony with the sentiment of so illustrious a Father of the Church, as St. John Chrysostom, who, speaking of Ps. cxxxvi, says: "Though these words are pregnant with rage and vengeance, they are the expression of the fury of the captives. The prophets often do not express their own mind, but represent the passions of others."

The foregoing remarks concerning the revengeful tone of the imprecatory Psalms, will also be found to contain a sufficient answer to the objection drawn from the spirit of revenge and persecution, which, as we are told, pervades the books of Esther and Judith: so that we do not deem it necessary to vin-

dicate in any particular manner, the moral teaching of these inspired writings. Of the other books of the Old Testament, the general contents of which have been incriminated as manifesting a low tone of morality, only two, to wit, the books of Canticle of Canticles, and Ecclesiastes, demand especial attention here.

As regards the former, it is clear that its inspired character, together with the high esteem in which it has ever been held among Jews and Christians, should prevent any one from thinking, even for a moment, that its general contents can be truly objectionable in respect of morality. In fact, the sweeping charges made sometimes against that sacred book, simply betray on the part of their authors a lack of knowledge of the mode of speaking upon such matters as it describes, which belonged to the age and people of its origin. In only one or two passages does there appear even a suggestion of moral impurity to one who takes this mode of speaking into account, and scholars who have seriously examined these passages, will readily admit with such an advanced Protestant writer as W. R. Smith, in the Encyclopedia Britannica,[1] that the words objected to in both places, are not genuine, but simply later additions: so that however objectionable these expressions may appear, they should not be regarded as a real difficulty against the moral teaching of the Canticle of Canticles.

[1] See Vol. v, art. Canticles (ninth edit.).

As regards the second of those most-incriminated books, it cannot be denied that many passages of Ecclesiastes, seem at first sight to bear out the unfavorable assertions made against its standard of morality. This is particularly the case with the oft-repeated sentence: "There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and make his soul enjoy good in his labor;"[1] and with such verses as the following: "There are just men to whom evils happen, as though they had done the works of the wicked: and there are wicked men, to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous: I said that this also is vanity. Then I commended because there was no good for man under the sun, but to eat, and drink and be merry; for this is what he can draw from his labor all the days of his life which God hath given him under the sun."[2] It must also be granted that the expressions "to eat, drink and be merry" are sometimes used in a bad sense, of vicious excess and indulgence, as for example, in Exodus xxxii, 6; Prov. xxiii, 7, 8; Judith xii, 12; I Cor. x, 17. It remains true nevertheless, that they are found in other parts of the Holy Writ, notably in I Kings xxx, 16; Isai. lxv, 13; etc., in a good or morally unprejudicial sense. Nor is it less certain that whoever bears in mind the true scope of the book of Ecclesiastes, will regard this latter meaning as

[1] Ecclesiastes ii, 24; iii, 12; v, 17; sq., etc.
[2] Ecclesiastes viii, 14, 15; Cfr, ix, 5 sqq.

the one intended by the writer. "In spite of the disconnected character of the author's utterances," says very well Prof. Driver,[1] "the general tone and drift of his meditations is unmistakable. Life under all its aspects is dissatisfying and disappointing: the best that can be done with it is to enjoy—not indeed in excess, but in a wise and well considered moderation, and as a gift intended by God to be enjoyed—such pleasures as it brings with it." Plainly, this is not the high moral teaching of the Gospel,[2] yet it cannot reasonably be charged with anything like immorality.

Thus then the leading objections urged against the sacred books of the Old Testament, prove that these inspired writings contain an imperfect, but not an immoral, teaching. They can be regarded as insoluble only by those who forget the fact that the Old Testament dispensation ever was in God's designs a passing stage in the moral training of His children, a stage marked by imperfections, real indeed, but bound one day to disappear. However great the weight we may allow these and other such difficulties to have upon our minds, they should never make us lose sight of the many excellent

[1] Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, p. 470 (Revised edit.).—The passages referred to in this connection by the eminent Protestant critic, are Ecclesiastes ii, 24; iii, 12, 22; v, 18 sqq.; viii, 15; ix, 7-10; xi, 9 sq.; that is, the very passages that are most objected to in respect of morality.

[2] This is distinctly admitted by Father Motais, in his valuable *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, p. 118.

features already pointed out in the moral teaching of the Old Law, as also of the great superiority which belongs to the ethical doctrines of the Old Testament Scriptures, when compared with those of other ancient religions. In no other religions of antiquity do we read of an ideal of holiness so lofty, so well defined as the one kept up before the Hebrew race: "I am Jehovah, your God: be holy because I am holy. . . . You shall be holy because I am holy."[1] In no other ancient religion do we find an institution like that of the prophetical office, the sole purpose of which was to preserve pure the worship of Jehovah in Israel and to rebuke sternly vice not only in the ordinary citizens, but even in the heads of the Jewish monarchy. Again, while almost all the religions of antiquity enjoined immoral practices in their idolatrous worship, the moral teaching of the Old Law never tolerated them or rather always proscribed them under the severest penalties.

When from these general features, which mark off the morality of the Hebrew creed as far above that of the other ancient religions, we come down to points of detail, we find that a similar superiority must also be recognized. This is clearly the case when we contrast it with Hinduism, the pantheistic religion of India, which perpetuates the social tyranny of castes; enjoins matrimony at the age of five or six; regards the widowhood of girls nine or

[1] Leviticus xi, 44, 46.

ten years of age as a punishment for crimes committed in a pre-existent state, and in consequence, condemns them to helpless and hopeless misery; accepts deities who are represented as licentious drunkards throughout the national literature; contains in its sacred books many passages, which Max Müller omitted from his translations of the Sacred Texts of the East, "lest he should be prosecuted for publishing obscene literature," etc. Nor is this less clearly seen to be the case when we compare the moral teaching of our inspired writings of the Old Testament with the ethical system contained in the sacred books of China. In vain would one look in the classical works of Confucius and Mencius for anything like the ideal of holiness set forth before Israel: "Be ye holy because I am holy," saith the Lord; for the precept of love toward one's neighbor as one's self, and for the other excellent features of the Old Testament morality which have already been mentioned. Instead of all this, the law in China is "to recompense injury with justice and kindness with kindness;" to consider woman as a necessary evil, as a thing which may be done away with in infancy, or sold later on into domestic servitude, or trafficked in for immoral use, etc.; to invest the head of the family with tyrannical power over his household; to impose frightful tortures to extort confession of crimes, and to inflict horrible punishment on parricides, etc. Only in connection with the ancient religion of

Persia do we find a morality worthy of being set side by side with that of the Jewish Law, and even then, several features are to the advantage of the latter. This is particularly true in regard to the criminal code of the Persians, wherein death is inflicted even for deciding a cause on account of a bribe, and capital punishment assumes the barbarous forms of the crucifixion, burying alive, etc., of the convicted criminals; and it does not appear that when polygamy came into use among them, any restriction was made in reference to its practice by the Persian monarchs.

II. As might naturally be expected, the high moral teaching of the Old Testament was continued by Jesus, the institutor of the new covenant, and by the Apostles. Our Lord had not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it,[1] and the mission entrusted to His disciples was identical with His own.[2] In point of fact, all the excellent features of the Old Testament morality are either distinctly traced anew or simply taken for granted in our New Testament writings. No system of castes is supposed to exist among God's rational creatures; the father is still the head of the household, and the mother of the family and the children owe him respect and obedience;[3] masters may still own slaves, but must not maltreat them;[4] civil authority must be respected

[1] Matt. v. 17. [2] John xvii, 18; xx, 21.
[3] Cfr. Ephesians v, 23; I Cor. xi, 3 sqq.; Coloss. iii, 20; etc.
[4] Ephes. vi, 9.

in all those who are invested with it, because it comes from above;[1] and foreigners should ever be considered as the creatures of God.[2]

But if it was only natural to suppose that the moral teaching of the New Testament would—as it actually does—continue that of the Old Covenant, it was still more natural to expect that it would remove its objectionable features, and make it in all points worthy of the One sent to fulfil the Law, of the Messias, "the king of righteousness." And this is precisely what took place. Divorce and polygamy disappeared,[3] and equality was restored between man and woman as regards matrimony;[4] every treachery was condemned in its very root by this declaration of the Son of God: "Let your speech be yea, yea; no, no; and that which is over and above these, is of evil;"[5] the spirit of persecution and revenge was time and again declared contrary to the spirit of the Gospel;[6] and the low ideals objected to in connection with several books of the Old Covenant, gave way to the very highest ideal set forth before all the children of God, in these wonderful words: "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect,"[7] and in these others: "If any man will come after me, let him

[1] Rom. xiii, 1–7; John xix, 11.
[2] Rom. iii, 29; Matt. v, 45 sqq.
[3] Matt. xix, 3–11.
[4] I Cor. vii, 4, 5.
[5] Matt. v, 37.
[6] Rom. xii, 19 sqq.; Luke, ix, 54–56; Matt. xiii, 24–30; etc.
[7] Matt. v, 48.

deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me."[1]

Further than this, whoever studies attentively the New Testament morality, will soon find that it improves on that of the Old Law, not only negatively, by setting aside its manifold imperfections, but also positively, by adding to its noble teachings, higher and nobler ones. The real value of man's actions is repeatedly made dependent on the purity of the motives by which they are prompted;[2] unselfish devotion to the glory of God and the welfare of man is promoted by every conceivable means, very particularly by placing before the eyes of all the example of the very Son of God living and dying for this twofold object; our thoughts and affections must be directed heavenwards, and we must look upon ourselves as pilgrims here below;[3] the higher merit of virginity and celibacy is inculcated as allowing our hearts not to be divided between earthly and heavenly interests;[4] whatever motive is suggested for holy living is summed up or perfected in love, and the type of manhood or womanhood set forth as the worthy object of our efforts is the one described in these noble words: "Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever modest, whatsoever just, whatsoever holy, whatso-

[1] Luke ix, 23.
[2] Matt. vi, 1 sqq.; xxiii, 5 sqq.; Luke xi, 34 sq.; etc.
[3] Matt. vi, 33; Coloss. iii, 2; Hebr. xiii, 14.
[4] Matt. xix, 10 sqq.; I Cor. vii, 7, 8, 32–35, 40.

ever lovely, whatsoever of good fame, if there be any virtue, if any praise of discipline, think on these things;"[1] childlike trust in God's fatherly care is emphatically stated to be the only frame of mind befitting the Christian believer,[2] while it should not exclude recourse to prayer, personal labor and the faithful discharge of the various duties of one's station in life;[3] finally, the true follower of Christ is a law-abiding citizen, even though he should chance to live under pagan rulers, and yet be ready to lay down his life, if need be, for his faith, fearing God far more than men.[4]

The foregoing sketch of the New Testament morality, however brief, enables us to realize the great difference which exists between the moral teaching of Christianity and that of Secularism. Secular morality bids man to live for this world and assigns pre-eminence to the duties of this life, while the Gospel teaches us ever to bear in mind things eternal,[5] and assigns the first rank to our duties towards God.[6] Secularism would have us do good for its own sake and lead upright lives irrespectively of a future life, Christianity prompts us to do good, not only because it is right to do one's duty, but especially for God's and Christ's sake, and with a

[1] Philip. iv, 8. [2] Matt. vi, 15–34.

[3] Luke xviii, 1; I Tim. v, 8; II Thessal. iii, 10.

[4] I Tim. ii, 1 sqq.; I Petr. ii, 11–24; Luke xiv, 26; Matt. x, 26 sqq.

[5] II Cor. iv, 18. [6] Matt. vi, 33.

view to secure the eternal bliss for which we were created and redeemed. Secularism affirms that personal industry combined with real knowledge of the laws of nature and not prayer, should be depended upon to secure health, or to move mountains, New Testament morality teaches self-distrust, humility, confidence in God's providence, and leads us to expect of the infinite goodness of our heavenly Father, whatever we ask of Him according to His holy will.[1] Finally, while Secularism aims essentially at promoting the temporal welfare of human society, Christianity looks upon it only as a desirable means toward the end of all creation, viz.: God's honor and glory in time and in eternity.[2]

Of course, in the eyes of secularists, these and other such differences are to the advantage of their ethical conception of human life. In reality, they are proofs of the superiority of the New Testament morality over the tenets of Secularism. It will ever savor of atheism to affirm that man should live for this world alone, or that his duties to his Maker should not hold the first rank in his thoughts and affections. The doing of one's duty for duty's sake is assuredly a noble rule of life, but it is no less certainly a rule that will not be acted upon except by a select few, and will invariably be ignored in practice, if not also in theory, by selfish masses, unscrupulous politicians, interested capitalists, etc., etc. Besides, the moral teaching of the New Testament

[1] I John v, 14, 15. [2] I Cor. x, 31; I Tim. ii, 2.

does not deny the value of this motive for right conduct; it simply adds to it, others, such as the love of God, of Christ, of man as Christ's member, the fear of endless punishment, the hope of eternal reward, etc., which, while in full harmony with human nature enlightened by faith, tend powerfully toward securing the fulfillment of duty in times of severe trials or temptations. No one can deny the beneficent power of science to allay man's suffering, and increase his capacity for lawful enjoyment; but it is sheer folly to pretend that it should do away with our notion of God's providence: however conversant the child of God may become with the hidden forces of nature, the humble and trustful frame of mind suggested to him by Christianity, will remain the befitting one in his relations with his heavenly Father, all good, wise and powerful. As regards prayer in particular, the following words of the Unitarian Jas. Freeman Clarke deserve especial notice: "One of the universal facts in the history of man is the custom of prayer and worship addressed to invisible powers . . . . When we find this custom of worship in all races, barbarous and civilized; in all times, the most ancient and the most recent; in all religions, from the lowest superstition to the highest spirituality; one of two things must be true. Either men have found that their prayers are answered, and that they actually receive blessings in consequence of prayer which they could not obtain without it; or else, though there is no answer to

prayer, and they get no good by it, they continue to pray from the necessity of their own nature. Prayer either brings divine aid, or it does not bring it. If it brings aid, then there are unseen personal beings who hear and answer prayer; and so Materialism and Atheism and Agnostic theories are confuted. If prayer does not bring aid, then, in addition to man's other endowments, he must have been created with such instincts of the heart, intuitions of the mind, and aspirations of the soul as to maintain a communion with powers unperceived by the senses . . . . Then he must have a religious organization, which has survived through all the long processes of development. If we accept the doctrine of the survival of the fittest, we must grant that the fittest man is the man who prays, and that prayer in some way or other has been helpful, and continues to be so."[1] It is true that the moral teaching of Christianity has not for its direct purpose to promote temporal welfare. Nevertheless, it is beyond doubt that the New Testament morality has contributed most powerfully toward the advancement of this material progress and civilization by raising effectually the moral standard in the family; by preaching justice and charity to the employers, patience and resignation to the working classes; by encouraging the building of hospitals for all the ills of humanity, and inspiring with heroic zeal for their neighbor's

[1] Jas. Freeman Clarke, *Ten Great Religions*, Part ii, p. 222 sq. (18th edit.).

bodily and spiritual welfare countless men and women down to the present day. So that it may truly be said with St. Paul, that "godliness is profitable to all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."[1]

Having thus shown that the tenets of Secularists are decidedly inferior to the moral teaching of the New Testament, there only remains to dispose briefly of the general objections which they urge more or less openly against Christian morality. They tell us, for instance, that many of the practices it enjoins, are gradually becoming antiquated. Assistance of the poor if carried out as prescribed by Christ, would encourage mendicancy; fasting and other bodily macerations are dying away from among us, for the simple reason that experience proves their hurtfulness to general health in our modern society; the attendance upon the sick recommended by the Gospel is indeed very primitive, and modern philanthropy appears far superior to it, inasmuch as it investigates the causes of the malady, and is bent on removing them not only by help in a particular case, but also by general sanitary laws, etc.; etc. This first objection will have little weight in the eyes of unprejudiced thinkers. Even the best-working financial or sanitary laws framed with a view to remove in their cause the pains of privation and disease, will always leave ample room and afford numerous opportunities for carrying out the

[1] I Tim. iv, 8.

evangelical precepts of almsgiving, visiting the sick, etc., so that all such precepts should not be considered as growing obsolete. Again, if modern philanthropy can justly point out its past or prospective achievements in behalf of the afflicted and the needy, it should be borne in mind that these very achievements would have ever remained impossible without the spirit of tender compassion and brotherly helpfulness which Christianity introduced into the Gentile world and fostered in it through centuries. In fact, the Christian Law was not given as a complete code of social duties or a treatise of political economy: it was meant to be a leaven destined to ferment the whole mass of humanity,[1] a spirit that would gradually transform the world into something higher and nobler:[2] and who would venture to say, that thus considered, the New Testament morality should ever be spoken of as out of date? As regards the practice of self-inflicted penances, it should be noticed that, while the moral teaching of the New Testament prescribes it, it nowhere specifies the extent to which it should be carried out, and takes for granted that this, like any other precept shall be fulfilled with due regard for the rules of prudence and discretion. As a matter of fact, comparatively few individuals, and still fewer communities, have given way to excessive mortification, and only in such cases has the prac-

[1] Matt. xiii, 33.

[2] Luke ix, 55 sq.; I Thess. iii, 12; etc.

tice of physical penances proved detrimental to man's bodily frame. At any rate, both the conflict between "the flesh and the spirit"[1] and the consequent necessity of "chastising one's body and bringing it into subjection" in order to secure one's salvation,[2] spoken of by St. Paul, are just as undeniable now as in the time of the Apostle of the Gentiles.

But, even granting, we are told, that the Christian Law should not be looked upon as fast becoming antiquated, is it not true that its fundamental conception of human life tends to unfit men and women for practical life? Its teaching regarding reliance on God and prayer, undermines self-reliance necessary for success in this world; the habit of speculation and abstraction it inculcates in bidding us to have "our conversation in heaven,"[3] "not to look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen,"[4] disables men's powers for the careful, absorbing study of the laws of nature; so truly impractical in fact, it is said, are its maxims regarding absolute trust in prayer, imperturbable patience, etc., that if acted upon they would certainly entail ruin for individuals and communities, and in consequence no one thinks of carrying them out implicitly and unreservedly. We readily grant that the moral teaching of the New Law as understood by some, or as exhibited in the lives of others, is open to the

[1] Gal. v. 17.
[2] I Cor. ix, 27.
[3] Philip iii, 20.
[4] II Cor. iv, 18.

charge made in the second objection: but this must be referred directly, and almost exclusively to the peculiarities of mind and heart and surroundings of such persons. Nor do we wish to deny that the habit of mystical speculation and abstraction fostered by Christianity tends, to some extent, to render men less attentive to certain details of ordinary life; but if the argument is valid against the profitableness of the Christian Law, it seems likewise valid against that of pure mathematics, advanced astronomy, etc.; and further, the great principles which underlie a truly mystical life,—such as those which impose perfect self-control, entire devotion to the good of our neighbor for God's sake, the habit of doing things as well as possible for God and under His eyes,—are unquestionably those we should naturally expect to be most useful in the discharge of man's ordinary duties in life. In point of fact, the lives of many eminent saints,—St. Bernard, St. Theresa, St. Francis of Sales, St. Vincent of Paul, for example,—that is, of men who had most given up self-reliance, depended so much more than ordinary Christians on the power of God and the help of prayer, had gone deeper than their fellow-men into the mysteries of the invisible world and lived more perfectly for the things of eternity, prove to evidence, that Christianity as such, even in its highest forms, does not prevent men from furthering successfully earthly interests. Yea, in our own century, and under our very eyes, the numberless

Catholic institutions established in behalf of the poor, the ignorant, the blind, the sick, the lepers, etc., etc., stand as so many eloquent witnesses to the fact that men and women whose lives are entirely devoted to God, are not thereby unfitted for the duties, most urgent and most weighty, of our earthly existence. Finally, when the words of the New Testament which concern perfect trust in God's fatherly care, absolute dependence on prayer, imperturbable patience, etc., are carefully examined, they are clearly seen not to yield the meaning put upon them in the objection stated above. The birds of the air which Jesus bids His disciples to imitate in trusting God's providence, do not indeed borrow trouble for the morrow, but they work very actively for their present sustenance, and in this wise, does our heavenly Father feed them.[1] In like manner, our Lord's words concerning the efficacy of prayer were never meant to dispense us with personal work here below, or even to make us feel absolutely sure to obtain whatever we choose to ask of God. It is true that His promise that all our petitions shall be heard is absolute in its form,[2] but this is the form of every general rule which is emphatically and concisely laid down, and the actual granting of our requests is repeatedly made dependent on our asking

[1] Matt. vi, 26 sqq.

[2] "Ask, and it shall be given you, . . . for every one that asketh, receiveth."—Matt. vii, 7, 8. See also Luke xi, 9, 10; John xv, 7, 16, etc.

that which is really good for us, or according to God's designs concerning us, or on other such conditions, which we should naturally consider as implied if so extensive a promise were made to us by a wise and powerful father or friend.[1] As regards the practice of imperturbable patience and meekness, it is plain to every unbiased reader of the New Testament that the words of Jesus are not a strict precept enjoined upon all, despite its practical impossibility for men at large, but simply a counsel of very high perfection to the practice of which only a few can and do attain.[2]

A third objection often made by Secularists against the New Testament morality, bears chiefly upon some of its features, which, according to them, tend to lower the natural dignity of man. This is particularly the case, we are told, with the Christian laws of humility, repression of ambition, and implicit submission to authority, because they seem to be contrary to manliness, spirit of initiative, and freedom of scientific investigation. To speak of the moral teaching of the new law as if it debased man's nobility and character, will ever appear a very unjust charge in the eyes of any one who has studied human nature and society. Whatever tends to destroy foolish pride and vain conceit and selfishness in its various forms, tends by the very fact, to ennoble our nature; and there is no doubt that the

[1] Cfr. Matt. vii, 9 sqq.; Luke xi, 11 sqq.; etc.

[2] See particularly Matt. v, 39 sqq.; xviii, 17; I Cor. vi, 1, 7.

practice of humility, modesty, moderation of desire, and other such Christian virtues, has gradually secured for our Western civilization a tone of simplicity, refinement and disinterestedness it would never have possessed otherwise. Implicit submission to authority cannot be considered as equivalent to slavery, else our army and navy should be supposed to consist only of slaves; and in fact, the submission is all the more imperatively required there, and enforced all the more strictly, because of the vital importance of the interests which depend on the maintenance of good order and discipline. Why then should submission to authority in the Church be considered as debasing? Implicit submission to the supreme authority with which God's immediate representatives are invested, is only right and therefore honorable, and it is the only means to maintain in the Christian community that peace and order, that union of minds and hearts, without which the Church cannot effectively pursue her supremely important mission of saving souls. It is true that a certain amount of freedom of thought is required for the pursuit of scientific investigations; but it is no less true that such freedom has ever existed in the Christian Church, and has been availed of by scholars and scientists in the course of ages.

But it is urged by Secularists, that "theological appeals are essentially not moral, but immoral. The hope of heaven and the fear of hell are motives purely personal and selfish. Their tendency is

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rather to make men worse than better. They may secure a grudging compliance with prescribed rules, but they must depress character instead of elevating it. They tend to concentrate a man's whole attention on himself, and thus to develop and intensify his selfish propensities. No man, can faithfully follow his highest moral conceptions who is continually casting side-glances at the prospects of his own soul. Secularism appeals to no lust after posthumous rewards or dread of posthumous terrors, but to that fraternal feeling which is the vital essence of all true religion and has prompted heroic self-sacrifice in all ages and climes."[1] The charge of immorality thus hurled against the religious and ethical teaching of the New Law which has been and will always be considered as embodying the highest and purest principles of righteous living, is particularly grating on the feelings of the Christian believer and is in fact, hardly worthy of examination. We subjoin, however, a few remarks, lest we should appear to leave the objection unanswered. It is clear, first of all, that the hope of reward or fear of punishment should not be regarded as something immoral in itself, else we should condemn as immoral the conduct of parents, or masters, or states, when they endeavor to promote in this way, the good of the child, the student or the citizen. Further, the love of self is one of the necessary laws

[1] G. W. Foote, the Gospel of Secularism, in *The Religious Systems of the World*, 2d edit., p. 801.

of sentient nature, and a great motive power which the Gospel, while recognizing it, undertakes to enlighten and direct in an unexpected and truly admirable way: the fullness of life, the greatest happiness is not to be found in seeking, but in renouncing self, not in enjoyment, but in sacrifice; and he who acts accordingly, cannot be charged with selfishness any more than the mother whose greatest delight is to sacrifice herself for her babe. Again, to expect,—as Secularists apparently do,—that men at large will always be guided by the highest and purest motive of love, is not to reckon with human nature as it exists here below, and to reject the only motives for good, which, as experience shows and as stated in the preceding pages, can prove sufficient under peculiarly trying inward or outward circumstances. Far better and wiser therefore is it for any moral teaching not to entirely set aside interested motives which are not wrong in themselves, while pointing all the time to something higher and nobler; and this the New Testament does, when it bids us love God with our whole heart and our neighbor as ourselves, and teaches us that perfect love casteth out fear.

In bringing to an end the present Lecture, I will mention the following remarkable admissions of the late Prof. Huxley, himself a Secularist: "I have always been strongly in favor of secular education, in the sense of education without theology, but I must confess I have been no less seriously perplexed

to know by what practical measures the religious feeling, which is the essential basis of conduct, was to be kept up in the present utterly chaotic state of opinion on these matters without the use of the Bible. The pagan moralists lack life and color, and even the noble Stoic, Marcus Antoninus, is too high and refined for an ordinary child. Take the Bible as a whole; . . . . eliminate as a sensible lay teacher would do if left to himself, all that is not desirable for children to occupy themselves with; and there still remains in this old literature a vast residuum of moral beauty and grandeur."[1]

These words of one who invented the word "Agnosticism," and accepted the name "Agnostic," proclaim loudly the peculiar moral excellence which belongs to our Sacred books of both Testaments, and which we should never be afraid of ascribing to them. Whoever, in fact, will bear in mind that their moral teaching was really progressive, that it was ever destined to reach its perfection in the New Testament morality, will find it a comparatively easy task to dispose even of the objections made against that imperfect stage of it, which we call the moral doctrine of the Old Law. Particularly, will he return thanks to God for giving to the world in the writings of the New Testament, that perfect rule of life which has raised to the highest point our notions of morality, and humbly ask of Him the

[1] Prof. Huxley, in the *Contemporary Review*, for December, 1870.

grace of fulfilling this desire of His only-begotten Son: "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven."[1]

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[1] Matt. v, 16.

LECTURE V.

RELIGIOUS WORSHIP IN THE BIBLE.

How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!
My soul longeth, yea, fainteth, for the courts of the LORD;
My heart and my flesh cry aloud for the living God.

The very sparrow findeth an abode,
And the swallow a nest, where she may lay her young,
By Thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God.

Happy they, who dwell in Thy house,
Who praise Thee all the day long!—(*Ps.* lxxxiii, 2–5).

SYNOPSIS OF LECTURE V.

Religious Worship in the Bible.

I. Importance of this Topic:

1. Its Connection with the General Aspects of the Bible already dealt with.
2. Amount of Scientific Research concerning it, during the XIXth Century.

II. Religious Worship in the Old Testament:

1. Worship of the true God:
   - The Leading Features of the Hebrew Ritual Described.
   - Elements in common with Religious Worship of
     - Other Semitic Races.
     - Egypt.
   - Principal Stages in its Development.
   - Manifold Superiority over the Religious Worship of Ancient Nations.
2. Idolatrous Worship:
   - Its exact Notion stated and explained.
   - Its Existence during the Various Periods of Jewish History.
   - How Accounted for among the Chosen People.

III. Religious Worship in the New Testament:

1. The Principal Features of a Christian Ritual pointed out.
2. The Christian and Hebrew Rituals compared.
3. The Religious Worship in the New Testament, truly Universal and Perpetual.

Concluding Remarks.

LECTURE V.

Religious Worship in the Bible.

How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!
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In their noble simplicity, these inspired words of the Psalmist describe beautifully the deep attachment he justly felt for the splendid services of the House of the Lord, seeing in them a most helpful means to lift up his whole being to the God of his heart. They bespeak also, in no less touching a manner, his intense regret, when he was detained far away from the sanctuary of his King and his God. In fact, these same words have been instrumental in keeping up, century after century, similar sentiments of devotion and love towards divine worship in the hearts of Jewish and Christian believers, and on this account, introduce fittingly the subject-

matter of the present Lecture, to wit: Religious Worship in the Bible.

I. To realize the great importance of this topic, one has only to bear in mind its intimate connection with the general aspects of Holy Writ which have so far been examined. The choice parts of the Bible as a Literature, are unquestionably the Psalms, that is, hymns either directly composed, or ultimately adapted, for the public worship of Israel. Biblical History constantly and justly bears witness to the fact that the practice of religion in some fixed forms, was ever among Eastern nations, a part of the citizen's public life, and it distinctly shows, especially in the books of the Old Testament, how completely the good or ill fortunes of the chosen people depended on their faithfulness or unfaithfulness to the right worship of their King and God. More intimate perhaps and obvious is the connection which exists between the Dogmatic Teaching of the Bible and the Religious Worship described therein. Throughout the sacred writings, public worship is directly grounded on an explicit belief in God's existence and leading perfections, and on man's total dependence on the Almighty power and goodness; while, on the other hand, dogmatic truths are symbolized, preserved, strengthened and developed in the various forms which religious worship assumes in the course of ages. Finally, the Morality taught in Holy Writ is closely connected with Religious Worship, inasmuch as all the sacred rites prescribed

by the Bible, are not only foreign to the immoral practices too often enjoined in other ancient religions, but always keep distinctly before the mind of God's chosen people, that ideal perfection and holiness which has so powerfully contributed to raise higher and higher the standard of morality among the children of men: "You shall be holy, because I am holy;"[1] "Be you therefore perfect as also your heavenly Father is perfect."[2]

Such then, briefly stated, is the first reason showing the importance of our present topic. Religious Worship is so intimately connected with the Literary, Historical, Dogmatic and Moral aspects of the Bible, that to master the latter topics, one must needs highly value and diligently study the former. A second reason manifesting this importance, is the attention which the subject of religious worship has received from scholars during the nineteenth century. While in preceding ages, the study of the public worship described in Holy Writ, was practically limited to the gathering of the data contained in our sacred books; in the century just elapsed, it has been enlarged and pursued steadily in the light of the other Semitic, or even non-Semitic ancient religions of the Eastern peoples. During the nineteenth century, countless monuments have been discovered in Egypt, Babylonia, and Assyria, and their hieroglyphic and cuneiform inscriptions successfully made out, while the sacred writings of Persia, China, and

[1] Leviticus xi, 46; I Petr. i, 15, 16. [2] Matt. v, 48.

India have been rendered into our Western tongues by eminent Orientalists. Again, travellers well acquainted with the creeds and rites of Eastern nations, have oftentimes borne witness in authentic records of their journeys, to the existence of religious practices, which one would have naturally regarded as extinct for centuries, but the survival of which evidences the perfect accuracy of the Eastern monumental or literary records.[1] From these and other such sources of information, a vast amount of material for the history of public worship among men has been gradually gathered, and its careful examination has led scholars to some of the most important conclusions in the comparative history of religions. It has proved, among other things, that all these ancient worships have passed through several stages in their development, that some of them exhibit many and striking resemblances to the public worship in the Bible, and that their very points of contrast with the Jewish and Christian rituals are not without bearing on our conceptions of the religious worship as described in our sacred books. In view then of all this labor bestowed on the leading religions of the world, as also of the conflicting theories to which it has given rise as regards their exact relation to the public worship described in the Sacred Scriptures, our present topic assumes a new and special importance, and we now proceed to deal

[1] Cfr. for instance, Eugene Flandrin, *Voyage en Perse*, vol. ii, p. 203.

briefly with its two main divisions: the Religious Worship, first, in the Old, and next, in the New, Testament.

II. Whoever reads attentively the inspired records of the Old Covenant, is soon struck by the very large number of minute particulars which they detail concerning the worship of the true Lord and God of Israel. This is especially the case with the three middle books of the Pentateuch,—Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers,—with certain portions of the historical books of Kings and Chronicles, and some chapters of the prophet Ezechiel. In fact, were all their details concerning the worship of Jehovah gathered up and systematized, they would make up a long and most instructive Hebrew ritual. For our present purpose, however, it will suffice to point out briefly the leading features of the public worship of the true God in Israel.

As might naturally be expected, some of those features are connected with the central place of worship for the ancient Hebrews. Although it is difficult, at the present day, to determine accurately the date of its establishment in their midst, no one doubts that its existence, during many centuries, contributed powerfully toward the development of the religious life among the Jews. It gradually became in the eyes of all, the House of God *par excellence*; for, while on the one hand, Jehovah delighted in receiving within its walls the homage of the people of His choice; His worshippers, on

the other hand, joyfully crowded in the Court surrounding His Sanctuary, anxious to stand in His presence and adore Him in the prescribed manner. The very names of the other two great divisions of the Lord's House, viz.: the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, reminded constantly the chosen people of the infinite holiness of their Lord and God. Again, the Holy Place could be entered only by the priests for the exercise of their august functions; while the Holy of Holies was accessible to the High Priest alone, whose privilege it was to penetrate once a year into the mysterious darkness of that most sacred place, and to stand, as it were, face to face with the thrice-holy God enthroned therein upon the golden lid of the Ark of the Covenant. It is not therefore surprising to find that, as time went on, the central place of worship in Israel was surrounded with ever-increasing reverence and love by the Jewish nation. As a matter of fact, in Our Lord's time, even to hint at the possibility of its destruction, was at once regarded as a blasphemy worthy of death.[1]

Other features of hardly less importance in the religious life of the Hebrew nation are connected with the institution of the Jewish priesthood. In a correct sense, all Israelites were "a priestly kingdom and a holy nation,"[2] especially set apart by the will of Jehovah, destined to offer Him the only sacrifices acceptable to the Divine Majesty, and to

[1] Cfr. Matt. xxvi, 61; etc. [2] Exodus xix, 6.

act as mediators between God and the other peoples. It remains none the less true, that side by side with this priesthood of Israel as a nation, individuals were selected by God Himself to be His priests in the stricter sense of the term. These were no mere delegates of the congregation, but expressly called to the holy ministry by Jehovah,[1] adorned with sacred vestments, consecrated by special rites,[2] enjoying real authority in things divine,[3] and fulfilling the office of mediators between God and His people.[4] In the several degrees of the Levitical order,—those of Simple Levites, Priests, and High Priest,—they were intended to have no landed possessions like the rest of their brethren, but to live by the altar of Him, Who was their special portion and inheritance.[5] Thus freed from temporal cares, they were destined to stand before all, as living samples of a constant, loving and entire dependence on the Almighty; they were also able to attend more fully to the service of the House of the Lord, and to offer, in a worthy manner, the various sacrifices which Jehovah was pleased to accept through their ministry.[6]

All the sacrifices, which it was the exclusive privilege of the Jewish priests to offer to Jehovah,[7]

[1] Exod. xxviii, 1 sqq.; Hebr. v, 1.
[2] Exod. xxix; Levit. viii.
[3] Exod. xxix; Numb. xvi, 9 sqq.; etc.
[4] Levit. i; v, 6; etc.; Osee iv, 4 sqq.; Numb. xviii, 22, 23.
[5] Numb. xviii, 20 sqq.; Ps. xv, 5 sqq.; I Cor. x, 13; etc.
[6] Pss. xiv; xv; xxii; Isai. lii, 11; etc.
[7] Exod. xxix: Numb. xvi; Ezechiel xliv, 6-16; etc.

fall under two general heads: (1) the bloody sacrifices, which included the whole burnt-offerings, the expiatory, and the pacific sacrifices, and in which Israel testified, by the slaying of animals, the supreme power of God over the life and death of His creatures; (2) the unbloody sacrifices, which comprised the first-fruits, tithes of the products of the land, meat and drink-offerings, and by which Jehovah was acknowledged as the bestower of the land and its produce. In all the bloody sacrifices, the priest received the blood of the animal in a basin, and then sprinkled it in different ways upon the altar of the holocausts before the Lord. In all the bloody sacrifices too, at least the fat of the animals offered was burned upon the altar, while in the expiatory and pacific sacrifices, other specified parts of the victim became the portion of the priest or even of the offerer. In all these sacrifices, finally, the selection of the victims was limited to animals of the herd, of the flock and to all clean birds, and the victim presented was required to be perfect of its kind and without blemish. In the unbloody sacrifices, the products of the country were brought before Jehovah, either in their natural state, as grain, fruit, wool, etc., or prepared for man's use, such as flour, oil, wine, cakes, etc., and these various offerings were made according to their respective rites. The libations of wine, for instance, were performed by pouring it out at the foot of the altar; the weekly offering of bread, by placing twelve

newly-baked loaves on the table of show-bread; and frankincense, besides accompanying every meat-offering, was burned every day on the golden altar of the Holy Place, and in the Holy of Holies on the great Day of Atonement.

Other most precise and binding regulations of the Hebrew ritual might be pointed out, as for example, in connection with the state of legal cleanness required to approach God's sanctuary, and the manner in which the weekly sabbath and sabbatic festivals, together with the yearly feasts of the Pasch, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, should be celebrated. But those which have just been recalled, are sufficient to enable us to realize something of the close resemblance which exists between the ritual of the Israelites and that of the nations belonging to the same Semitic stock. For if we put aside those variations in respect of material for sacrifice, which can easily be accounted for by corresponding variations in the fauna and flora of their respective countries, we shall soon find on comparison, that the other Semitic peoples,—the Arabs, Phenicians, Babylonians, etc.,—agreed with Israel in offering both kinds of sacrifices (bloody and unbloody), and in presenting to the deity the same animals (oxen, sheep, goats, pigeons, turtle-doves, etc.), and the same produce of the land (cereals, wine, oil, etc.). Traits of resemblance may also be discovered as regards the manner in which the material of sacrifice was treated by the priest and

by the worshipper. This is the case for instance, with the slaying of animals and the pouring out of their blood; with the libations of wine mentioned above; with the placing of food on a kind of show-bread table; etc. In point of fact, the Hebrew ritual is so much alike to that of the other Semitic races, that so eminent an authority in this matter as the late Prof. W. Robertson Smith,[1] does not fear to state that "as regards later times, the Hebrew sacrifices are sufficiently typical of the ordinary usage of the Semites generally."

But however closely the religious worship of Israel and that of the other Semites may have resembled each other, it is beyond doubt that the Hebrew and Egyptian rituals appear more similar still. The general form of the Jewish Temple and of the Tabernacle, together with the leading parts of the Lord's House, (the Court, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies, which was considered as the place wherein Jehovah resided) have their exact counterpart in the general form and principal divisions of Egyptian temples, while the Ark of the Covenant resembles very closely the arks of the Egyptian gods Amen-Re, Mut, and Ḫonsu. The Jewish priesthood with its hierarchical degrees recalls that of the Egyptians, all the more so because the laws of purity enjoined on both are practically identical, and the priestly garments very similar in regard to form and material. Like Israel, Egypt

[1] *The Religion of the Semites*, p. 218 (2d edit., 1894).

had its bloody and unbloody sacrifices. In both Israel and Egypt, the former comprised whole burnt-offerings, and expiatory and thanksgiving sacrifices, in which specific parts of the victims belonged either to the priest or to the worshipper; and in both countries, the blood of the animals offered was to be poured out; yea more, a large number of the sacrificial rites seem to have been common to both rituals. Similar remarks apply to the unbloody sacrifices both as regards their material and the manner of offering it; and to a large extent also, to holy convocations, and to the monthly festival on the first day of the moon. So that it may be safely asserted that, outside the Egyptian practices in honor of the dead and other such idolatrous rites severely banished from Israel's ritual, the religious worship of the chosen people resemble very much that of the Egyptians.[1]

The close relationship just noticed between the ritual of the Hebrews on the one hand, and that of the other Semites and of the Egyptians on the other, clearly does not go back to the beginning of Israel's history. When one studies attentively the life of the immediate ancestors of the Jewish race, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, from the standpoint of their religious practices toward the true God, he is soon

[1] For details, see Abp. W. Smith, *The Pentateuch in its Authorship*, vol. i, p. 289 sqq.; and works on Egypt, by Rawlinson, Wilkinson, Kenrick, etc.—Cfr. also *Outlines of Jewish History* by the present writer.

struck by their simplicity as compared with the intricate worship of a later date. Some of the features found in the Mosaic ritual are indeed to be found in connection with the patriarchal religious worship; yet even they are described in Genesis with such details as betoken a primitive stage in the development of the Hebrew liturgy. This is the case, for instance, with Abraham's payment of tithes to Melchisedech; with his preparations for the sacrifice of his son Isaac, and his actual offering of a ram in Isaac's place; with Jacob's pouring of oil upon the top of the stone he had set up for a title, etc.[1] Greater freedom too as to the rearing of altars in various places is clearly enjoyed during this early period than at later times, when public worship became limited to the one sanctuary of Jehovah in Jerusalem: in fact, at this early stage in the religious worship of the true God, the patriarchs freely erect altars and offer sacrifices almost in every place where they pitch their tent.[2] It is also worthy of notice that in these patriarchal times, no desire of atoning for sin appears among the motives which prompted men to offer sacrifices to the Almighty.

With Moses, a new stage opened in the development of Hebrew worship. Under his influence, the ancient worship of the patriarchs was invested with new features, most of which are detailed in the

[1] Cfr. Genesis xiv, 20; xxii; xxviii, 18; etc.

[2] Cfr. Gen. xii, 8; xiii, 18; xxi, 33; xxvi, 25; xxviii, 18; xxxiii, 20; etc.

middle books of the Pentateuch, that is in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. Born and brought up in Egypt, he had become deeply versed in Egyptian religious knowledge,[1] so that when he gave to Israel their ceremonial laws, these were naturally impregnated with reminiscences from the Egyptian ritual. In like manner, during his long stay in Madian, and through daily contact with the Madianite priest, his father-in-law, he acquired a great familiarity with the old Semitic rites as preserved in the peninsula of Sinai, and thus he was enabled to utilize them in the framing of those ritual laws which go back to him. Thus did it come to pass, that Hebrew worship assumed during this period, most (if not all) of the numerous and striking traits of resemblance which we have mentioned above between the ritual of Israel and that of Egypt and of the Semites in general. Meantime, and as might well be expected, some peculiarities of the old patriarch worship were not done away with, as proved by the fact that Exod. xx, 24 sq., allows the offering of sacrifices in various places, and that Moses, Josue, Gedeon, Samuel, etc., etc., continue to erect altars or offer sacrifices in different places about as freely as the patriarchs of old. Yea more, several Catholic scholars admit that even after the erection of Solomon's temple in Jerusalem, Jehovah was lawfully worshipped in many high-places, and the Levitical priesthood was not yet fully organized.

[1] Cfr. Acts vii, 22.

It is beyond doubt, however, that during the new stage of ritual development inaugurated by the building of the first temple to Jehovah, and extending to the Babylonian Captivity (588 B. C.), the centralization of divine worship in Jerusalem was gradually enforced, and the priestly functions defined with greater and greater precision. It must also be admitted that the stately worship in honor of the true God that was carried out in the Holy City and in other sanctuaries of Jehovah,[1] was little by little rendered purer through the pious efforts of such holy kings as Ezechias and Josias, and more particularly through the prophetical teaching of Amos, Osee, Isaias, etc. Unfortunately, this very giving up of local high-places as also the temporary faithfulness in offering to Jehovah costly sacrifices at His preferred sanctuary on Mount Sion, soon betrayed the Hebrews of that period into the erroneous belief that the perfect worship required by the God of hosts, consisted simply in an outward compliance with liturgical customs and regulations. Then it was that, to correct this erroneous frame of mind, and check a tendency so entirely opposed to the true conception of divine worship, the prophets of the time raised their voice in solemn warnings, stern rebukes, or touching entreaties, inculcating the most important truth that God cares above all things for inner righteousness and inward worship. But the people at large were manifestly unprepared for so

[1] Cfr. IV Kings xviii, 4; xxiii, 4 sqq.

important a forward step in the development of religious worship; they mostly continued to honor Jehovah with their lips and their costly offerings, persuaded that they could thereby secure God's forgiveness for the past, and protection against threatening national evils.[1]

Far from correcting this erroneous notion, the Captivity of Babylon did but apparently confirm it in the Jewish mind. The Hebrew exiles deprived of all sacrificial worship in that foreign land, learned to value it all the more upon the Return; and it must be said that their great leaders during the last period in the history of Israel's religious worship, seem to have been much more concerned about enforcing the Levitical laws that would secure the nation against relapses into idolatry, than about obtaining God's worship "in spirit and in truth." Thus did it come to pass that the chosen people of God became more and more wedded to the religious practices of the Mosaic codes as they had been developed in the course of ages, and that the strict Pharisees before and in Our Lord's time, could wield such power upon the minds and wills of the multitudes, because of their most scrupulous care in fulfilling the letter of the Law. It should be borne in mind, however, that the condition of divine worship during the centuries which preceded immediately the Christian era, was not one exclusively of religious inferiority and decay. Even in

[1] Cfr. Isai. xxix, 13 sqq.; i, 10 sqq.; etc.

those days of over-scrupulous compliance with Levitical and Pharisaic laws, thousands of souls like Simeon, Anna, and others spoken of in the Gospels, knew how to couple inner righteousness, true inward worship with ceremonial blamelessness, and ardently longed for the days of the Messias, when both Jews and Gentiles would share in the purest and highest worship of Jehovah. Besides, the services held in the synagogues which were scattered throughout the Roman empire, disconnected as they were with the offerings of rams, goats, etc., gradually prepared the world for the introduction of the higher Christian ritual thus foretold by Malachias:[1] "From the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, my name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name, a clean oblation: for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts."

The foregoing is, of course, but a brief, and consequently, incomplete, sketch of the principal stages in the development of God's worship among the Hebrews. Yet it allows us to realize that the ritual of Israel was in many respects superior to that of such ancient nations as India, China and Persia. In none of these countries, the worship of the deity did follow anything like the line of progressive development, which we have traced in connection with the worship of the true God in Israel. In no ritual of these ancient nations, and at no period in

[1] Chap. i, 11.

its existence, do we find impressed upon the worshippers such distinct idea of the infinite holiness of the Almighty, and of the purity required to approach Him, as we notice at each step in the Hebrew ceremonial law. In no other ritual outside that of Israel, were the various duties of thanksgiving, sorrow for sin, petition and adoration so often inculcated as the ends which the worshipper should keep in view while putting up his prayer or offering sacrifice. Finally, in connection with no other ritual, do we read in history, of a permanent body of men like the prophets, whose great purpose in life was to recall to their fellow-countrymen the supremely important truth that the faithful discharge of religious ceremonies, and the frequent offering of costly sacrifices are of very little value before God, unless accompanied by holiness of life, and true inward worship.

But while the worship of the true God among the Hebrews appears invested with such manifold superiority over that which ancient nations paid to the deity, and was therefore calculated to raise them proportionately higher in religious practices, it cannot be denied, that too often, they forgot their glorious privilege as the chosen people of God and gave themselves up to so shameful an idolatry that the like of it is not found in the worships of some other nations, such as Persia and ancient India, for instance. Before, however, dealing with the idolatrous worship of the Hebrews in the various periods

of their national history, it will not be amiss to recall and explain in a few words, what in the light of divine revelation, is really meant by idolatry. By worship of idols we should not understand any and every kind of reverence and honor which man can manifest toward visible objects calculated to remind him of God and His various attributes. Reverence and honor shown to our parents and superiors for God's sake, to all our fellow-men because made after the divine image and likeness, have plainly nothing idolatrous about them; and Holy Writ teaches that all creatures are so many divinely-appointed means to make known to man the existence and chief perfections of their almighty Maker.[1] Again, the use of various images, the handiwork of man, in connection with divine worship, is not of itself and necessarily, something idolatrous, provided divine honors are not ascribed to them, as may be clearly inferred from the fact that it was through the express ordinance of God, that the cherubim were placed in the Holy of Holies, and the walls and pillars of the Tabernacle and the Temple, adorned with figures of palms, pomegranates, etc. Nor is even the use of images or other such visible representations as a means of securing divine blessings, to be construed at once and of itself, into an idolatrous worship of them, inasmuch as God Himself not only approved, but even actually appointed such a use of the brazen

[1] Cfr. Ps. xviii, 1 sqq; Romans i, 19–23; etc.

serpent in the Wilderness. Of this we are explicitly told in the book of Numbers xxi, 8, 9, where we read: "And Jehovah said to Moses: 'Make a brazen serpent and set it up for a sign: whoever being struck shall look on it, shall live.' And Moses made a brazen serpent and set it up for a sign: which when they that were bitten looked upon, they were healed." And it is only later that we read of the Israelites being forbidden to pay reverence and honor to that brazen serpent, viz.: after it had become the object of the religious awe and worship due to God alone.[1] Whence it clearly appears that idolatry consists really in that transfer to a mere creature,—be it an image, a man, a stone, the sun or moon, etc.,—of that manner of reverence and honor which belongs to God alone.[2]

Of the existence of such idolatrous worship among the Hebrews, we find, alas, too many proofs through the various parts of their history. During the patriarchal times, we have, it is true, only faint traces of it in the sacred narratives of Genesis;[3] but the idolatrous propensities of Israel were developed and intensified during the sojourn in Egypt, and they were sadly let loose soon afterwards. Thus, we are explicitly told of their criminal worship of the golden calf at the very foot of Mount Sinai,

[1] Cfr. IV Kings (II Kings in Hebrew Bible and Protestant translations) xviii, 4.

[2] Cfr. article "Images" in the *Catholic Dictionary*.

[3] Cfr. Genesis xxviii, 20, 21; xxxi, 32 sqq.; xxxv, 2 sqq.

and with the express consent of Aaron, Moses' brother (Exodus xxxii, 1 sqq.); as also of their most shameful yielding to the licentious and idolatrous rites of the children of Moab, at a somewhat later date (Numbers xxv). Indeed, in view of the strong tendencies to idolatry that are evinced by falls such as these, one can readily understand why one of the commands of the Decalogue had to be directed against all kinds of idolatrous practices, and why Moses' parting words to Israel were solemn injunctions to the same effect.[1]

Despite this divine precept, the solemn injunctions of Moses, and those of Josue, his immediate successor in command, the children of Israel soon gave themselves up to the shameful and idolatrous rites which they found prevalent among the Chanaanites, whose land they had but partially conquered. In fact, the history of the entire period of the Judges is that of constant oscillations between the worship of Jehovah, the God of their fathers, and that of "the Baalim and Astaroth,"[2] and it is only with the introduction of the prophetical office among them that something like an effective check is set against their idolatrous tendencies. The one who started this salutary reaction was the holy prophet Samuel, who did so much by his personal efforts,[3] and especially by the schools of prophetism

[1] Cfr. Exod. xx, 3 sqq.; Deuter. iv; etc.
[2] Cfr. Judges iii, 7; iv, 1; vi, 1; viii, 33; etc.
[3] I Kings or Samuel, vii, 3, 16; etc.

he established in Israel, toward making of the Hebrews a truly monotheistic nation. The reigns of Saul and David were, as far as we know, times of general faithfulness to the worship to Jehovah on the part of the people, but the same thing can hardly be said of the long rule of Solomon. In the absence of positive information to that effect, it is very difficult to estimate the exact religious condition of Israel under this last prince; it may well be conjectured, however, that the evil example of a monarch who, to please his foreign wives, did not hesitate to erect high places for their impure gods, and probably went so far as to actually "worship Astarthe, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Moloch, the idol of the Ammonites," exercised the most disastrous influence upon the minds and hearts of his weak subjects. Whence it may well be inferred that people and courtiers followed him in his worship of strange gods, and this is confirmed by the present reading of the Hebrew Text in III Kings xi, 33: "*They* have forsaken me, and have worshipped Astarthe, the goddess of the Sidonians, Chamos, the God of Moab. . . ."

After the disruption of Solomon's empire into the two kingdoms of Juda and Israel, we find that in both these great sections of the Hebrew nation, princes unfaithful to the worship of the true God reigned about alternately with rulers faithful to it, and that in consequence the children of Israel gave way repeatedly to idolatry despite the heroic efforts

of the prophets of the royal period.[1] This was the case in the Southern Kingdom, or Kingdom of Juda, even after the destruction of the Northern Kingdom, and it finally became evident that the only means to remedy the extent and depth of its idolatry, was to have its members carried captives far away from the high places where a splendid, antique and licentious worship had betrayed their fathers and themselves into idolatrous practices. In point of fact, the Babylonian exile may be said to have broken the spell that had detained for centuries the Hebrew race from the steady worship of Jehovah, and to have brought about such a strong reaction against idolatry that the descendants of the returned exiles remained, as a body, invariably faithful to national monotheism.

Such are the main facts which the sacred narrative discloses concerning the existence of idolatry through the various periods of Jewish history. However strange they may appear at first sight, on the part of the chosen people of God, so constantly and providentially taken care of by the Almighty, yet upon reflection, they will appear to be what might naturally be expected from such a nation as the ancient Hebrews. For beside man's natural tendency to centre his affections in sensible and visible objects, such as money, pleasure, power, etc., and to be ruled by them as by gods, the Hebrew race inherited from their ancestors strong tendencies

[1] For details, see *Outlines of Jewish History*.

to polytheism, as we clearly see from these parting words of Josue: "put away the gods which your fathers served in Mesopotamia and in Egypt,"[1] and from this significant statement of Ezechiel: "Thus saith the Lord God to Jerusalem: thy root, and thy nativity is of the land of Chanaan, thy father was an Amorrhite and thy mother a Cethite."[2] Such deeply-rooted tendencies to idolatry would naturally make themselves powerfully felt under circumstances favorable to their development, and in the case of Israel, circumstances of the kind were very often realized. Among such circumstances we may mention: (1) the fact that they dwelt for centuries, both in Egypt and in Chanaan, in the midst of populations addicted to idolatry, and freely intermarried with them;[3] (2) the belief of ancient Eastern nations, that one must worship the gods of the land in which he dwells;[4] (3) the community of rites which existed between the Hebrews and the polytheistic nations belonging to the same Semitic stock; (4) the magnificence, and more particularly, the licentiousness which ever characterized the worships of Moab, Ammon, Phenicia, Chanaan, etc., and which ever exercised so powerful an attraction for the low and idolatrous instincts of ancient Israel; (5) the strong influence in favor of idolatry, which a large number

[1] Josue xxiv, 14, see also verse 15.

[2] Ezechiel xvi, 3. [3] Cfr. for instance, Judges iii, 6.

[4] See for instance, I Kings xxvi, 19; IV Kings xvii, 26 sqq.; etc.

of Jewish rulers exerted upon so small an extent of territory as the one ever occupied by the Hebrew nation; (6) and finally, the fact, often lost sight of in this connection, that the various sacrifices and rites of the old Covenant, were, as St. Paul says "weak and needy elements,"[1] "which have not profited those that walked in them,"[2] that is ordinances of themselves incapable of effecting and bestowing real strength and grace, this being reserved to the Christian dispensation and to its religious worship, of which we now proceed to give a brief treatment.

III. It is true that, when compared with the sacred books of the Old Testament, those of the New afford us but a very scanty information from which to draw a picture of divine worship during the period to which they refer. Their purpose was not to detail instructions that would guide the new Israel of God in matters pertaining to religious worship; and in consequence, it is only incidentally that they touch upon features more or less essential to the ritual of the early Church. It should be borne in mind, however, that though, or rather because, incidental, the references to religious worship which are found in the New Testament records, have a peculiar importance and are worthy of being carefully gathered up and examined.

Among these references, some imply the existence of a real sacrifice, as a distinct act of public worship

[1] Galat. iv, 9. [2] Hebrews xiii, 9.

in the early Christian Church. This is the case with the Epistle to the Hebrews (xiii, 10), where we are told that Christians are indeed excluded from the sacrificial services of the Temple, but that this exclusion is compensated by a sacrifice which has taken place of them and is of a nobler kind; for "we (Christians) have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat who serve the Tabernacle." It is this same sacrifice of the New Covenant, which is referred to in the first Epistle to the Corinthians (x, 16–21), for St. Paul has clearly in view a sacrifice, the very sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, as repeated in public services and shared in by the Christians of his time, when he says: "The chalice of blessing, which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread, which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord? . . . . Behold Israel according to the flesh, are not they, that eat of the sacrifices, partakers of the altar? . . . . The things which the heathens sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God . . . . You cannot drink the chalice of the Lord, and the chalice of devils; you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord, and of the table of devils." It is also easy to recognize in these words of the Apostle of the Gentiles, an authentic commentary and faithful echo of those of the Lord, when He instituted the sacrifice of His most precious body and blood for all future times. For St. Paul says in the very next chapter (I Cor.

xi, 23 sqq.): "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke, and said: take ye and eat; this is my body, which shall be delivered for you, this do for the commemoration of me. In like manner also, the chalice, after He had suffered, saying: this chalice is the new Covenant in My blood; this do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of Me. For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until He come."[1] Besides, the very idea of a "new Covenant" that had been introduced by the Messias, between God and man, would naturally require in the eyes of the Jewish converts, the introduction also of a sacrifice different from those of the Old Law, and it is most likely to that view of the matter that the passage of the Epistle to the Hebrews quoted above directly refers. Indeed, all the primitive converts to Christianity, whether from Judaism or from heathenism, would never have thought of a real worship of the Almighty, otherwise than as implying an offering to him of a real sacrifice in the name of the religious community to which they belonged. Finally, it is well known that the prophet Malachias[2] foretold the substitution of a

[1] Compare the parallel passages in Matt. xxvi, 26–28; Mark xiv, 22–24; Luke xxii, 19–20.

[2] Malach. i, 10, 11.

universal sacrifice for all those of the Old Law in the coming kingdom of the Messias, so that the proofs which have been adduced to show its existence in the primitive Church find a natural and powerful confirmation in the fact that this existence had been the distinct object of ancient prophecy.

Of course, the institution and actual offering of a true sacrifice in the New Testament worship, entailed the establishment and practical working of a real priesthood distinct from that of the Old Testament. Of such "ministers of the New Covenant"[1] we repeatedly hear in the sacred records, and there are at least two distinct degrees among them, to wit: those of bishops and deacons.[2] The former, as we are told in the Book of the Acts,[3] "were placed by the Holy Ghost to rule the Church of God;" and they, like the latter, received ordination by the imposition of hands.[4] These sacred ministers were really superior to the rest of the flock, and as such had a positive right to the respect, obedience and love of those placed under their care.[5] Like the ministers of the Old Covenant, "they are God's coadjutors"[6] in securing man's salvation; and as for this purpose they have given up worldly pursuits[7] and devoted their entire selves to the welfare

[1] II Cor. iii, 6. [2] I Tim. iii, 1, 8, 10; etc.
[3] Acts xx, 28; see also I Tim. iii, 5.
[4] I Tim. iv, 14; v, 22; etc.
[5] Hebr. xiii, 7; I Thessal. v, 12, 13; etc.
[6] I Cor. iii, 9; etc.
[7] II Tim. ii, 4. Cfr. Acts xv, 26.

of their brethren and the discharge of their sacred office, they have a like right to live of the altar at which they minister.[1] Finally, the various degrees of the new hierarchy once established, must be perpetuated by the care of the apostles' immediate successors in selecting men in all points fit for this most excellent office.[2]

A last general feature to be mentioned in connection with the divine worship in the New Testament, regards the celebration of religious festivals, and very particularly, of the Lord's Day. Beside the offering of the Holy Sacrifice, which is designated under the expression of "breaking of bread," and which took place at every regular meeting of the early Christians,[3] the primitive Church continued to celebrate the yearly religious festivals which God had instituted for His ancient people, Israel, such as the Passover, the feast of Pentecost, etc.,[4] the celebration of which had been faithfully complied with by Jesus Himself. The distinctively religious meetings of Christians on "the first day of the week"[5] or "the Lord's day," are often mentioned in the sacred writings of the New Testament, whereas meetings on "the sabbaths" are mentioned exclusively in connection with the synagogue services to

[1] II Tim. ii, 6, 7; I Tim. v, 17, 18; etc.
[2] I Tim. iii, 1–10; v, 22; Titus i, 5; etc.
[3] Cfr. I Cor. xi, 20; Acts xx, 7; etc.
[4] Cfr. I Cor. v, 7; Acts xx, 16; etc.
[5] Acts xx, 16; I Cor. xvi, 1, 2; etc.

which the first preachers of the Gospel repaired apparently for the sole purpose of announcing Christ to the Jews and Jewish proselytes.[1] This, together with the fact that the Epistle to the Colossians,[2] ranks the Sabbath among the ordinances "which are a shadow of things to come," clearly points to a gradual giving up of the sabbatical observance, and in so far, also to the substitution of the celebration of "the Lord's day" in its stead. As regards the precise religious services to be held on that day, very few particulars can be gathered from the sacred text; but they all point to the conclusion, that they gradually assumed the fixed form of which St. Justin has left so valuable an account in his First Apology (150 A. D.).[3] According to him, the leading features of the Sunday service consisted in the reading of the Evangelical narratives and the writings of the prophets, followed by an exhortation on the lessons read, common prayer, the holy Sacrifice proper, a collection for the orphans, etc.;[4] and these general features, it may be noticed in passing, are precisely those which still characterize the celebration of the Lord's day in all the sanctuaries of the Catholic Church.

Thus, then, the Christian ritual, which may be discovered in the inspired writings of the New Testament, appears much less intricate than the

[1] Acts xiii, 14, 44; xvii, 2; etc. [2] Colos. ii, 16, 17.
[3] St. Justin, First Apol., chap. 67.
[4] Cfr. Acts xx, 7, 9; I Cor. xvi, 1, 2; etc.

Hebrew ritual. In it, one single sacrifice and one single Victim take the place of the various sacrifices and countless victims of the Old Covenant. In it, too, the rites of the sacrifice are incomparably simpler, and the priestly organization much less developed. This is also the case with the celebration of the feasts of Pasch and of Pentecost, and with numerous particulars connected with the public meetings, for only in the course of time could the pastors of the Church give to the Christian services, sanctuaries, etc., something of the outward beauty and splendor which had surrounded the worship of the true God in the Old Testament dispensation.

Another conclusion which forces itself upon the mind, when comparing the Christian and Hebrew rituals, regards the intimate relation in which they stand to each other, seeing that, in almost all its leading features, the Christian continues the Hebrew religious worship. The Holy Eucharist, for instance, is a sacrifice clearly analogous to the thanksgiving offerings of the Old Law, and most of the ceremonies which ever accompanied its celebration, bear the impress of its institution by Our Lord in the midst of His last Paschal supper.[1] The other parts of the early Christian services, such as the reading of the prophets, the exhortation on the lessons read, the common prayer, etc., betoken also a Hebrew origin: they simply continue in the

[1] Cfr. I Cor. v, 7, 8.

meetings of the primitive Church, the usual features of the synagogue services, both before and in the time of Christ and His apostles. In fact, the general resemblance between the two rituals is so universally known and admitted that we do not need to insist on it.[1]

On the other hand, however close this resemblance may appear, it should not make us lose sight of the manifold superiority of the Christian religious worship over that of the ancient people of God. The bloody offerings of oxen and goats and sheep, etc., powerless to effect and bestow on worshippers the pardon of sin and inward righteousness, have given way to a clean oblation, to the holy sacrifice of the Lamb of God, the intrinsic value of which cannot be surpassed, and the atoning power of which exceeds all human comprehension. Again, while the Jewish priests could only declare legally clean those that had recurred to their ministry and were sprinkled by them with the blood of slaughtered victims, the priests of the New Law can remit sin through the divine power entrusted to them to apply the blood and merits of Christ to the soul of repentant sinners.[2] Finally, while the Hebrew worship was by divine decree and by a necessity of its nature, restricted both as to place and as to time, the

[1] Cfr. Gustavus Bickell, *Misse und Pascha,* rendered into English by W. F. Skene, under the title of *The Lord's Supper and the Passover Ritual* (Edinburgh, 1891).

[2] Heb. ix, 13; John xx, 23.

religious worship in the New Testament is truly universal and perpetual. It was only in the Temple that the various victims of the Old Covenant could be immolated, whereas, according to the prophecy of Malachias, already quoted, the divine sacrifice of the New Law will be offered everywhere, and its oblation will ever be welcome to the Almighty.[1] In like manner, the Old Testament dispensation and its form of worship were shadows of the verities to come, destined to give way to better and more lasting gifts, whereas the new manner of worship and its sublime realities introduced by the very Son of God, are meant to subsist to the consummation of the world, because they are an integrant part of the "everlasting Covenant."[2]

In closing the present Lecture, I will make two general remarks, in connection with the subject of religious worship as presented in the Bible. It is clear first of all, that at no time in the history of divine worship as contained in Holy Writ, God intended that a purely internal honor and reverence should be paid to Him. Public religious rites, especially those that assume the form of sacrifice, go back to the most remote antiquity, and will ever remain not only the most fitting acknowledgment of God's supreme Majesty, infinite holiness, justice and liberality, but also the means best calculated

[1] Malach. i, 10, 11.

[2] Heb. xiii, 20; see also I Corinth. xi, 26.

to impress upon, and develop in, the minds and hearts of men, the feelings which they should bear toward their almighty Maker and Preserver. Outward rites when devoid of the inner corresponding reverence and love to God, are no better than a hypocritical show, as expressly declared by the prophets of old;[1] and in like manner, inward worship, which would never give external manifestation to its deep and tender feelings of respect and love toward man's supreme Master and all-loving Father, would soon amount to little more than self-delusion.[2] True worship, both in the Old Testament and in the New, must needs include the dedication of the entire man, "of his whole heart, of his whole soul, and of all his might," of his body as well as of his soul, to the Author and Preserver of both; for as expressly declared by the Incarnate Word, "the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father seeketh such to adore Him."[3]

In the second place, it is no less clear that the history of divine worship as told in the Bible, discloses God's purpose that His worshippers should offer Him public homage through the agency of ministers appointed by Him, and not simply "called" by a congregation. For in both stages of the divine worship, that is, both before and after Our Lord's time, those who minister at the altar of the Lord, are described as invested with

[1] Cfr. Isai. xxix, 13; Mark vii, 6.
[2] Cfr. Malachias, i, 6. [3] John iv, 23.

a special office and dignity, as "selected from among men, and ordained for men in the things that appertain to God . . . no man taking the honor to himself, but that is called by God, as Aaron was."[1]

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[1] Hebr. v, 1, 4.

LECTURE VI.

THEOCRACY IN THE BIBLE.

"The conception of the kingdom of God is a marked characteristic of Jewish religious thought, and perhaps its most distinctive peculiarity."—(*C. H. Toy*).

SYNOPSIS OF LECTURE VI.

THEOCRACY IN THE BIBLE.

I. The Theocracy in the Old Testament:

1. Leading Features of a Theocratic Rule.
   - God, the Head of the State.
   - The Divine Covenant (imposed, yet freely accepted; eternal, of its nature).
   - The Theocracy compatible with any outward Form of Government.
2. Its Historical Stages:
   - The Primitive Covenant with Israel.
   - The National Ideal of the Kingdom under David.
   - The Prophetical Ideal of the Kingdom of God.
   - The Jewish Expectations of later Days.
3. The Jewish Theocracy compared with the Theocratic Rule outside of Israel.

II. The Theocracy in the New Testament:

1. The Theocratic Expectations at the Beginning of the Christian Era.
2. General Features of the New Theocracy:
   - A Real Continuation of the Old Testament Theocracy.
   - A Development of the Old Testament Theocracy.
   - Its Identity with the Visible Church of Christ.
3. The New Testament Theocracy "the New and Eternal Covenant."

Concluding Remarks.

LECTURE VI.

Theocracy in the Bible.

"The conception of the kingdom of God is a marked characteristic of Jewish religious thought, and perhaps its most distinctive peculiarity."—(*C. H. Toy*).

Among the leading conceptions which run through the Bible, and which, on that account, deserve to be regarded as general aspects, we must unquestionably reckon that of "the kingdom of God." It is an idea clearly set forth and gradually developed by the inspired writers of the Old Testament, and repeatedly inculcated by Our Lord and the early preachers of Christianity, who represent the chosen people of the New Covenant as the inheritors of the Old Testament Theocracy, or as sharers in its blessings.[1] It is also an idea which, in recent years, has engaged in a very particular manner, the attention of theological and biblical writers; so that it is only natural that it should be one of the subjects of the "Biblical Lectures." We shall, therefore, consider briefly the kingdom of God, or the Theocracy, as it

[1] Matt. xxi, 43; I Petr. ii, 9, 10; Ephes. ii, 19; etc.

is conceived, first in the Old, and next in the New, Testament.

I. The first distinctive peculiarity of the "Theocracy," or "the kingdom of God," is suggested by those very names. In the first appellation, our attention is directed especially toward the head of the government, and *God* (in Greek, *Theos*) is expressly pointed out as the One whose will and power are the immediate and supreme rule; so that by "Theocracy," we naturally understand "a government among men recognizing the immediate sovereignty of God and receiving His revelations as its civil law."[1] In the second appellation, the particular nature of the social organization which recognizes God's immediate rule, comes more distinctly to view; it is a kingdom mostly resembling the other kingdoms, but yet having God as the head of the State. A commonwealth is therefore a "theocracy," and can be called the "kingdom of God," only in so far as the Divine Majesty is its immediate head, and as it were, its King. It was because the Hebrews of old wished to do away with this first feature of their theocratic rule, that they asked Gedeon to accept the Jewish throne, and that he answered them, saying: "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: but Jehovah shall rule over you."[2] This was also their frame of mind when, at a later date, they went to

[1] *A Standard Dictionary of the English Language*, "Theocracy." [2] Cfr. Judges viii, 22, 23.

Samuel, and said to him: "Make us a king, to judge us, as all the nations have," and in consequence, their request was unwelcome not only to God's faithful prophet, but also to the Lord, who returned to Samuel's complaining words this significant answer: "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not be King over them."[1]

The second distinctive peculiarity of the theocratic rule is most intimately connected with the one just set forth. As the Almighty is not only the God, but also the King, of a theocratic people, it follows naturally that the social compact is not primarily between the people at large and one or several members of the community, but between the entire nation and its God. Thus does it come to pass that the social compact assumes the special character of a divine covenant, that is of an agreement, which has peculiar features of its own, because the Almighty is, as it were, a party to it. First of all, the covenant is truly imposed by God, yet freely accepted by His subjects; for it is plain, that since, on the one hand, the Almighty is the absolute Master of all creatures, it rests with Him to define the conditions under which a people will be His "peculiar" people and kingdom; and that since on the other hand, those whom he has thus graciously selected for His subjects, are truly free agents, they may accept or refuse His conditions for themselves and their posterity.

[1] I Kings (or Samuel) viii, 5–8.

In the second place, when the divine covenant has actually been entered into, it is everlasting of its nature. Not only is God "the Eternal;" He is thrice-holy in His ways and infinitely just in His judgments; so that, at no time, can He be conceived as exceeding His rights or otherwise unfaithful to His covenant. Whence it naturally follows that the covenanted people can never be regarded as having the slightest right to secede from God's special dominion, or in anyway withdraw allegiance from their ever-loving and ever-lawful King.

Such briefly stated, is the real nature of a theocratic rule as we may infer it from the sacred writings of the Old and the New Testaments. It consists in a divine covenant, which forever binds a people to God as to their true and immediate Sovereign, and which extends to the entire nation, to its simple members and also to its visible rulers, because they all alike stand in the relation of subjects to the divine Head of the commonwealth. It therefore matters but little what manner of outward organization is in vigor among the theocratic nation, whether God's people be administered by Judges, High-Priests, or even Kings, for it is the plain duty of all such officers to look upon themselves simply as the vice-gerents of the Divine Majesty, the true Master and Lord of the theocracy. One outward form of government may indeed be more favorable, or on the contrary, more opposed, than another, to the preservation of the divine covenant which must

unite the theocratic people to their divine Head; but yet, as clearly proved by Jewish history, the theocratic rule may operate successfully under even a monarchy, while it may run the greatest dangers for its very existence under the government of High-Priests.[1] No outward form of government implies of itself the transfer to some one else of the allegiance which is due to God alone; and on that account, a theocratic rule is compatible with any manner of political organization.

As might well be expected, the Theocracy, the leading features of which we have briefly pointed out, passed in the long course of Israel's history through several important stages of development: prepared long beforehand, it was instituted on Mount Sinai, and thence underwent considerable changes according to the various circumstances of time and place, and more particularly, according to God's mysterious designs.

The remotest historical trace of a preparation for God's primitive covenant with Israel, is found in the blessing of Sem by Noe: "May He (God) dwell in the tents of Sem."[2] In these simple but pregnant words, the race of Sem is pointed out as the one selected to be blessed with the presence and indwelling of God, that is with a very peculiar relation to the Almighty: He will be their God in a special manner, and they will be His people. The next

[1] For details, see *Outlines of Jewish History.*

[2] Genesis ix, 27.

step forward in the same direction, is clearer and more decisive, for it distinctly tells of the seed of Abraham as destined to become a great nation, by means of which all the kindred of the earth shall be blessed.[1] In fact, the divine promise assumed the form of a covenant offered by God,[2] accepted by Abraham,[3] and extending to his seed after him,[4] under the condition that they will be faithful to the true God,[5] and observe all His laws and decisions.[6] Henceforth Jehovah is the God of the Hebrew race,[7] and the covenant with Abraham becomes the inheritance of Isaac,[8] of Jacob,[9] and through the last named patriarch, of the twelve tribes of Israel.[10] It is true that during Israel's stay in Egypt, God seemed to have forgotten His people, but it was not so. It entered from the first, in His designs that His promises to the ancestors of the Hebrew race should be fulfilled only after their seed had grown into a large nation, which would need the exercise of His delivering power and which he would purchase from foreign bondage into His own people (cfr. Gen. xv, 13 ; xlviii, 21 ; l, 23, 24). At length, through Moses, Jehovah carried out His purposes of love, freed Israel "His people" (Exod. iii, 7, 10, etc.) from their bondage, and having led them through

[1] Gen. xii, 2, 3; xviii, 18.
[2] Gen. xv, 18; xvii, 2, 10; etc.
[3] Gen. xvii, 23.
[4] Gen. xvii, 9, 10, 13.
[5] Gen. xvii, 7, 8.
[6] Gen. xvii, 14; xviii, 19.
[7] Gen. xvii, 7, 8.
[8] Gen. xxvi, 3, 4.
[9] Gen. xxviii, 13 sq.
[10] Gen. xlvi, 3, 4; xlviii, 21.

the waters of the Red Sea and the wastes of the Wilderness to the foot of Mount Sinai, wished to enter into a formal covenant with them and their posterity.[1] He therefore bade Moses tell the children of Israel: "You have seen what I have done to the Egyptians, how I have carried you on eagles' wings and brought you unto Myself. Now, therefore, if you will truly hearken my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my peculiar possession above all peoples; for all the earth is mine. And you shall be unto Me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation."[2] Thus was God's primitive covenant with the Hebrew nation set before them in Jehovah's name, and it was freely accepted by them,[3] with the result that henceforth, Israel, the redeemed nation of the Lord, is His special property, truly His kingdom, and indeed "a priestly kingdom and a holy nation," while God is their King as of no other nation,[4] residing in their midst "in the tabernacle of the covenant,"[5] accepting their gifts and sacrifices, and exercising through His delegates the powers of supreme judge, commander of armies, etc. The theocracy thus instituted is as yet limited to a particular people, to God's "first-born Son;"[6] but in the divine designs it is already intended to extend to other nations that will hear of the Lord through His "priestly kingdom." Meantime, it

[1] Deuter. iv, 37–40.
[2] Exod. xix, 3–6.
[3] Exod. xix, 8, 9; xxiv, 3, 4, 7.
[4] Deuter. xxxiii, 5.
[5] Exod. xl, 32 sqq.; xxxi, 7; etc.
[6] Exod. iv, 22.

is Israel's priestly mission to keep intact God's covenant by offering sacrifices pleasing in His sight, and by keeping aloof from the impure worship of surrounding nations.

It is in virtue of this primitive covenant with the Hebrew nation, that during the two periods which immediately followed on its institution, to wit: the Forty Years' Wandering and the Time of the Judges, Jehovah did not allow His chosen people to quietly settle down in idolatrous practices, but repeatedly took care to assert His right over them as His own people and kingdom. In this, then, they were truly different from the rest of the world; while in other respects, their national development went on the same lines as among the other historical peoples of antiquity. The time came, in fact, when, tired with their fractional condition and the weakness consequent thereon, they longed for[1] and finally secured a stronger central government in the establishment of the monarchy.[2]

The election of a visible king in Israel opened naturally an important period in the history of the Hebrews, and also in their theocracy. It was of vital importance that the Jewish monarch should not liken himself in all points to his kingly neighbors, and thus lose sight of the fact, that his primary duty as the visible head of the kingdom of God was that of perfect compliance with

[1] Judges viii, 22, 23.
[2] I Kings (Samuel) viii 4–6; 19, 20.

the will of the divine Sovereign, who had appointed him His vice-gerent. And yet, this is precisely what happened in the case of Saul, the first incumbent of the Jewish throne. On two several occasions relating to national matters, he went against Jehovah's will, and having thus failed signally in the fulfilment of his most important duty, he was rejected, together with his posterity, from the royal office in Israel.[1] Then it was that Jehovah called to the theocratic throne in the person of David, "a man according to His own heart,"[2] that is, one willing to govern in a manner acceptable to the real Sovereign of the Jewish commonwealth. Sacred history details how this new elect of God became king over Juda and next also over the other tribes of Israel; how he took the strong city of Jerusalem, and made of it the capital not only of all Israel but also of a vast empire extending far and wide beyond the limits of Chanaan; how finally, as a reward for his faithfulness to theocratic principles, he received from Jehovah "a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth,"[3] and the solemn promise that his house should reign forever over Israel.[4] All this, together with the wonderful internal organization and prosperity of David's rule, excited the grateful ad-

[1] I Kings xiii, 8 sqq.; xv, 3, 22 sqq.—See also *Outlines of Jewish History*, chaps. xvi, xvii.

[2] I Kings xiii, 14.

[3] II Kings (Samuel) vii, 9.

[4] II Kings vii, 11 sqq.

miration of the Hebrew people, and gradually transformed the glorious founder of the Jewish monarchy into the ideal ruler of the theocracy,[1] and the prosperous condition of Israel under him into the national type of the kingdom of God. "Thus was stamped upon history in rough and imperfect miniature the national type of the kingdom of God; for in David's days we see the kingdom of Jehovah, including all Israel and many other nations, centred in Jerusalem, and ruled by a King of the House of David, who is Jehovah's Anointed (Messias) or the Lord's Christ (II Kings or Samuel xix, 21)."[2]

The disruption of David's empire upon the death of Solomon, his son and successor, the consecutive destruction of the two kingdoms which had arisen out of it, the settling down of the greatest number of the Jews in the lands of their captivity, etc., were so many historical circumstances which deeply affected the public welfare of the Hebrew commonwealth, and consequently, also of the Old Testament Theocracy. They were also so many apparent obstacles to the fulfilment of God's solemn promises to David,[3] the type of the faithful theocratic king. It was indeed difficult to conceive how Israel and Juda, so long and so profoundly divided, could be

[1] Cfr. Jerem. xxx, 9; Ezech. xxxiv, 23 sq.; etc.—Cfr. also Mark xi, 10.

[2] F. H. Stead, *The Kingdom of God*, part I, p. 20.

[3] Isaias lv, 3; etc.

brought together again under one of David's sons, all the more so because the ten tribes of the north had practically become lost among their heathen conquerors; how the mighty pagan nations outside of Israel could be brought under subjection to the small remnant of the Hebrew race, which had so long and indeed still proved unfaithful to Jehovah's covenant; how too, the "always rebellious"[1] and "stiff-necked" Jews[2] could ever be transformed into a nation invariably true to the pure worship of God; how, in a word, the divine designs as revealed to the patriarchs of old and as manifested to David, could be carried out by making the now shattered Hebrew race a worthy channel of everlasting blessings for all nations in a world-wide theocracy. To these, and other such problems, the holy prophets of Israel gave a true, though incomplete answer, the main elements of which may be briefly pointed out as follows.

God truly intends to establish here below a universal kingdom by means of the people of His choice, and this universal kingdom will be set up ultimately in great power and glory. For this purpose, His infinite wisdom and holiness will in due time bring together Jews and Gentiles, and make them elements worthy of His rule and that of His Messias or Anointed. Israel, long unfaithful to Jehovah, is punished in various ways by

[1] Deuter. ix, 24; etc.

[2] Exod. xxxii, 9; xxxiv, 9; Deuter. ix, 6, 13; etc.

means of the heathen powers with which it comes into contact,[1] and only a Jewish remnant is destined to be the stem of the universal kingdom. It will become such through sincere return to God, deep repentance and also through a new vital principle implanted in the minds and hearts of the Jews by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.[2] In connection with this inward renewal of the Hebrew nation, it is sometimes stated that the Holy Land is forever confirmed to Israel; that Jerusalem will be restored to the re-united tribes, and all kinds of evil banished for ever.[3] The second element of God's universal kingdom is furnished by the Gentile races, a remnant of which will survive the punishment inflicted upon their idolatry, and will be incorporated together with Israel, to do homage to their common Lord and God.[4] In this way, David's empire will be restored, with Jerusalem and its temple as the centre to which the nations will journey, for their incorporation is represented as an acquisition of the rights of citizenship in the Holy City, while their admission into the enlarged kingdom of God is regarded as a means to bring back those members of the covenanted people still scattered in the world and thus complete the restoration of Israel.[5] Finally, this great work of man's re-

[1] Ezechiel v, 5 sqq.

[2] Joel ii, 28; Jerem. xxxi, 34; etc.

[3] Joel iii, 20; Amos ix, 14 sq.; Osee ii, 2; iii, 5; Isai. xi, 13; ii, 5; xi, 6–8; lxv, 25; etc.

[4] Isai. ii, 2 sqq.; lx, 9 sqq.; etc. [5] Isai. lx, 9 sqq.

demption from sin and its consequences, is repeatedly described as consummated by Jehovah Himself,[1] and also by His Anointed, the Messias, whose person and work are so often foreshadowed in the Psalms and in the prophetical writings. Among the many traits which go to make this Messianic picture we may more particularly notice Christ's birth in Bethlehem;[2] His descent from David; His kingly dignity; the going out of His power from Jerusalem to submit to His sceptre all the nations of the earth;[3] His titles of "Son of Man"[4] and "Son of God;"[5] and lastly, His vicarious sufferings through which He shall reach to everlasting power and glory.[6]

As might well be expected, predictions so glorious for their race were treasured up by the Jews, carefully studied by their priests and scribes and elders, and it must also be said, interpreted in a more and more materialistic sense by popular imagination. It is indeed true that the spiritual and moral elements of the Messianic prophecies were never entirely set aside; but they fell very much into the background, the general tendency being to overlook them and to hope for the restoration of the kingdom to Israel with all the worldly prosperity which seemed involved therein. In fact, the popular conception of the Messias was influenced chiefly by

[1] Zachary xiv, 16; Ezech. xliii, 2, 7; etc.
[2] Micheas v, 2 sq. [3] Ps. cix. [4] Daniel, vii, 13.
[5] Wisdom ii, 11 sqq. [6] Isai. liii; Ps. xxi; etc.

those uninspired writings which were composed toward the end of the period which extends from the Babylonian Captivity to Herod the Great. The principal of these apocryphal works are the Sibylline Books, the Book of Enoch, and the Psalter of Solomon or of the Pharisees, all of which bear the unmistakable impress of the time when they were composed. The might and tyranny of heathen oppressors served only to suggest the certain retribution and just vengeance which hung over them. A personal Messias was expected to restore national glory, and a splendid destiny was promised to the Jewish race. The people were thus led to expect better times, but also to expect them upon earth, and in earthly things, rather than in spiritual advantages.[1]

The foregoing is but a brief and incomplete sketch of the historical stages in the development of the Old Testament theocracy. It suffices, however, to give us an idea of the special relation which Israel, as a theocratic people, bore to the God of the universe. Although the Almighty ever directed, according to the purpose of His mercy, the deeds of the other nations of antiquity; yet, with none of them did He make a special covenant, intrusting it with His revelation concerning Himself and man's redemption; and over none of them did He

[1] For details concerning the Apocryphal books of the Old Testament, see *General Introduction to the Study of the Holy Scriptures*, chap. v.

watch with jealous care lest it should forever settle down in idolatry. In this sense, therefore, it is correct to say that, during the centuries which preceded Christ's coming, there was really no theocratic rule outside of Israel; and that, as affirmed by Professor Toy, "the conception of the kingdom of God is a marked characteristic of Jewish religious thought and perhaps its most distinctive peculiarity."[1] This should not, however, betray us into thinking that the other ancient peoples did not believe themselves the special favorites of some particular divinity. The Moabites, for instance, looked upon Chamos as their national god, as the master of their land, which he had bestowed on them and had made truly theirs, and over which he watched with sedulous care.[2] Again, in ancient times, Church and State were everywhere most intimately united, and wars between nations were also wars between their respective deities. Clearly, then, like Israel, the surrounding tribes and nations considered themselves under a kind of theocratic rule; and as in Israel, so also among them, this popular conception kept alive the most important beliefs in the existence of a personal God, of a real and active Providence, and of some sort of national responsibility. On the other hand, we should most

[1] *Judaism and Christianity*, p. 303.

[2] Cfr. Judges xi, 24, and King Mesa's inscription discovered in 1869, in H. A. Harper, *Bible and Modern Discoveries;* Ph. Shaff, *Bible Dictionary;* etc.

carefully refrain from placing the conceptions of other ancient peoples on the same level with those of Israel. The Moabites, for example,—and this is true of the other tribes and nations around Palestine,—never thought that their god Chamos would secure to them universal dominion, or that he would become the god of all the peoples of the earth. Nor does it appear that the theocratic rule as conceived outside of Israel ever contained anything like the moral and spiritual elements which were always found in the Old Testament theocracy, in behalf first of the Hebrews themselves, and next of the rest of mankind. Finally, in no nation outside of Israel do we find any trace of that direct, though gradual, preparation for the final revelation of God in Christ and His Church, that can be perceived through the principal historical stages in the development of the Old Testament theocracy.

II. Despite this manifold superiority of the theocratic rule among the Jews, despite also its preparatory character for the coming of Christ and the establishment of the New Testament theocracy, many among the Jews, at the beginning of the Christian era, had given up all hope of the restoration of the kingdom of God in Israel.[1] It appears, for instance, that the Sadducees,—a priestly and aristocratic party with little faith and less hope,—did not cherish in any way, the theocratic ideas of

[1] For useful remarks in this connection, see Dr. Briggs, the *Messiah of the Gospels*, p. 38 sqq.

the ancient psalmists and prophets, but simply studied to maintain the temple-worship in its integrity, and to live on good terms with the Roman Empire. It seems likewise,—though for other and nobler motives,—that the Essenes (a small mystical sect in Our Lord's time) sought to realize the Kingdom of God in a community of saints by withdrawal from the world and purification of the flesh, and had, as a body, no further Messianic ideal, no hope of national reform.

But side by side with the skeptical Sadducees and the mystical Essenes, lived a conservative and influential party in the sect of the Pharisees. They had united to preserve the theocratic institutions and hopes of their country from the inroad of foreign thought and ritual, and had succeeded by their oral teaching, their example, their writings, etc., in keeping up in Israel something of the theocratic conceptions of past ages. Under their powerful influence, the bulk of the Jewish people thought that the future Messias, would be primarily a political leader, a mighty deliverer,[1] and also a restorer of the Jewish institutions to their primitive purity. They looked for a descendant of David, born in Judea, who would start a world-wide empire, of which Jerusalem would be the capital,[2] and in which the sons of Abraham would be superior both

[1] Luke i, 74; Luke xxiv, 21, etc.

[2] Mark xi, 10; Luke xx, 41 sqq.; John vi, 15; Matt. v, 35; etc.

in temporal and spiritual matters.[1] To be admitted into this Messianic kingdom it was sufficient for the Jews to observe the enactments of the Mosaic law, to which the Messias would Himself be subjected.[2] The kingdom was regarded as very near at hand,[3] and as one to be set up through some mighty deeds of the Messianic King.[4] The rule of the Messias was expected to be eternal,[5] and His sufferings predicted by the prophets of old were entirely lost sight of.[6] Finally, the kingdom of God would be made up of all the Jews,[7] and only faint traces appear of the Gentiles being called into its blessedness through sharing in the Jewish faith and worship. In a word, the current notions of the people were mostly those of the apocryphal literature of the last century before Christ, while the distinctly moral features of the prophetical ideal,—such as the necessity of repentance for entering the kingdom of God, the inward righteousness required in its actual members, etc.,—seem to have been taken into account only by a small number of holy personages of that period, by Simeon, Anna, and a few others.[8]

It is plain therefore that the public expectations of the kingdom and of its King at the beginning of the Christian era were calculated to prevent the

[1] Matt. xx, 21. [2] Luke iii, 7, 8.
[3] Luke xix, 11; John iv, 25.
[4] John vi, 30; vii, 31; etc. [5] John xii, 34; etc.
[6] Luke xviii, 33, 34; xxiv, 25, 26, etc.
[7] John vii, 35. [8] Luke i, 17, 77; ii, 31, 34, 35; etc.

people of God from preparing by true repentance for their sins, for the reception of the kingdom of God about to be set up among them. This is why, as the period of preparation is almost at an end, John, the son of Zachary, is sent with the mission of preparing the ways of the Lord,[1] of restoring all things to a right condition,[2] and of making the nation "a perfect people" unto the Lord.[3] Faithful to his mission of precursor, John insists chiefly on those features of the kingdom which have been almost entirely lost sight of by the Jews. He lays very special stress on moral reformation within his own nation: "Do penance," says he, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."[4] Descent from Abraham is no title whatever in his eyes to protect his fellow-Jews from the judgment of the approaching dispensation, and he even seems to look outside of Israel for membership for the kingdom of God.[5] Only "fruits worthy of penance," as he solemnly proclaims, can secure for his hearers, a share in the coming kingdom, and these they must bear without delay, for already the Messias is at hand to institute a sifting process not unlike that upon a threshing floor. His baptism is only "a baptism for the remission of sins;" but the Mightier than he, comes after him bringing a baptism of the Holy Ghost,[6]

[1] Luke i, 76.
[2] Mark ix, 11, 12.
[3] Luke l, 17.
[4] Matt. iii, 2.
[5] Matt. iii, 9; Luke iii, 7 sqq.
[6] Luke iii, 16 sq.; John i, 3.

that is a full endowment of divine power such as had been foretold by the ancient prophets as the means of establishing and maintaining the righteousness of the Messianic nation. Finally, in pointing out Jesus as "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world," as the One "that was before him,"[1] he brings his mission to an end, and distinctly sets forth what it imports so much his contemporaries to know, viz.: that the Messianic King is already among them, and that by His sufferings and death He will atone for the iniquity of the world.

The more one reflects on the kingdom as announced by John the Baptist, the more also will he find, that it is not a novel thing entirely unconnected with the past. On the contrary, John's conception of it is substantially identical with the prophetical ideal described above as one of the historical stages in the development of the Old Testament theocracy. Only as it is his privilege to prepare the Jews immediately for God's universal kingdom,[2] his teaching expresses very emphatically the necessity for his contemporaries to do penance without the least delay.

The foregoing remarks make it clear then that John's ideal of the kingdom about to be set up is no other than that of the ancient prophets; and this in turn enables us to realize how the kingdom as conceived and preached by Jesus, is also a continu-

[1] John i, 29, 30, 31, 36. [2] Luke vii, 26, 27.

ation of the old prophetical ideal. For it is beyond question that Our Lord's mission of preaching the kingdom in Israel,[1] must be regarded in its main features as a continuation of that of His holy precursor. Thus to begin this very mission, Jesus waits until John the Baptist has been confined to prison,[2] and then His preaching opens with the exact words which John had used to bid men prepare for the coming kingdom: "From that time, Jesus began to preach, and to say: "Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,"[3] a form of address, which even at a later date, He directs His disciples to use: "And going," He tells them, "preach, saying: The kingdom of heaven is at hand."[4] Again, in His own preaching of the kingdom, He clearly follows the same general line of thought as St. John before Him. Like His holy precursor, for instance, He inculcates the necessity of doing penance in order to escape destruction;[5] speaks of the Gentiles as future sharers in the kingdom of God;[6] lays great stress on moral reformation within the Hebrew people; speaks of the baptism of the Holy Ghost;[7] etc. Yea more, the very differences which may be noticed between St. John's preaching of the kingdom and that of Jesus, prove

[1] "To other cities also I must preach the kingdom of God, for therefore am I sent." (Luke iv, 43.)

[2] Mark i, 14; Matt. xv, 24. [3] Matt. iv. 17.

[4] Matt. x, 7. [5] Luke xiii, 3, 5; Matt. xii, 41.

[6] Matt. viii, 11; etc. [7] John iii, 4, 5.

that the latter is a continuation of the former. Thus Our Lord's announcement of the actual presence of the kingdom in the midst of the Jews,[1] differs from the preaching of St. John that the same kingdom is very near at hand, only in so far as it is the continuation of that of His holy precursor. It is for a similar reason, that over and above the sincere repentance which St. John had preached to prepare for the coming kingdom, Jesus requires faith: the kingdom is now present, and its actual existence is so opposed to the earthly expectations of the chosen people that only through faith can they realize the fact of its presence among them, and avail themselves of the invitation to enter into it. Again, it is true that Our Lord's words relating to the admission of the Gentiles together with, and even instead of, the Jews, into the kingdom of God,[2] have a distinctness foreign to St. John's words on the same topic;[3] but this difference may be easily accounted for in the same way as the foregoing: the kingdom being now set up among the Jews, the time is also now come when they must be told more explicitly of the blessed condition of the Gentiles who will be admitted into it, and on the contrary, of the wretched fate of the Jews who will refuse to enter.

Thus then Our Lord's preaching of the kingdom was truly a continuation of that of St. John, and

[1] Matt. xii, 28; Luke xvii, 21. [2] Luke xiii, 28.
[3] Luke iii, 8.

in so far also, of the prophetical ideal under the Old Testament dispensation. But there are other features hardly touched upon in St. John's preaching, which Jesus had clearly in view in establishing His kingdom on earth, and it can be easily shown that in regard to these too, the New Testament theocracy is a continuation of that of the Old Testament. He usually speaks of that kingdom as "the kingdom of God," and thereby implies the most essential feature of a theocracy, viz.: the immediate sovereignty of God over His chosen people. In this theocratic kingdom, the perfectly faithful King, of whom David was but a shadow in his compliance with the divine will, is Jesus, who "did always what pleased the Father" (John viii, 29); was "born King;"[1] inherited David's throne like Solomon, but is "greater than Solomon;"[2] and has an inalienable right to an empire which will include both Jews and Gentiles.[3] Salvation is to be extended to the Gentiles by means of the Jews,[4] according to the promise made to Abraham; and it is to be effected through the laying down of His life by Jesus, as foretold of the servant of Jehovah, by Isaias.[5] As the Old Testament theocracy was gradually developed, so will that of the New Covenant be submitted to the law of organic growth.[6] Like the former, it

[1] John xviii, 37. [2] Matt. xii, 42.
[3] John x, 16–28; Luke xiii, 28; Acts i, 8; etc.
[4] John iv, 22. [5] Isai. liii, 3–12; John x, 15 sqq.
[6] Matt. xiii, 1–23; Mark iv, 26–29.

will be a visible society made up of simple members and of divinely appointed officers;[1] and in it, as in the Old Testament theocracy, members and rulers unworthy of their calling will be found side by side with faithful children and holy ministers of the living God.[2] In fine, it is plain that the kingdom contemplated and instituted by Jesus is a real continuation of the Old Testament theocracy, since He calls His kingdom, "the kingdom of His Father;"[3] and since He solemnly affirms that He has not come to destroy the Mosaic and Prophetical ideals of the theocracy: "Do not think," says He, "that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."[4]

It will easily be noticed that Our Lord's words last quoted, beside implying that His work will be a real continuation of the kingdom of God as described in the Old Testament, point out a new and most important feature of the New Testament theocracy. They describe it as being in regard to the Old Testament theocracy in the line of a fulfilment, that is, of a development which will bring about its intended, and as it were, natural culmination. In point of fact, what the Almighty contemplated from the first in calling the seed of Abraham to become a great nation, was that

[1] Matt. xxiv, 45; Luke xxii, 25 sqq.
[2] Matt. xiii, 24–30; 47–50; xxiv, 47 sqq.; etc.
[3] Matt. xxvi, 29; Luke xi, 2; etc.
[4] Matt. v, 17.

through it "all the kindred of the earth should be blessed."[1] For this purpose, too, He had entered into a formal covenant with Israel on Mount Sinai, intending that it should be "His priestly kingdom"; and with the same end in view, He had given to the Hebrew people that wonderful series of prophets that would keep them faithful to their national calling. And now the time has come when the hitherto narrow limits of the theocratic nation must expand to let in those of the Gentile races which may be desirous of sharing in its moral and spiritual privileges. The time has come also when the Old Law must be modified, particularly in its ceremonial prescriptions, in such, for instance, as relate to the unity of the place of sacrifice, to bloody sacrifices, etc., in order that it may be transformed into one suitable to a "kingdom" formed "out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation."[2] Now in carrying this out, in instituting the New Kingdom through the union of Jews and Gentiles into one "nation" which will be a faithful theocratic people,[3] it is clear that Our Lord simply fulfils the primitive divine plan concerning the salvation of mankind through the seed of Abraham.

Nor is it less evident that, on many other important points, the Kingdom of God was raised by Jesus in the New Law to a higher point of de-

[1] Gen. xii, 2, 3; xviii, 18; Galat. iii, 14.
[2] Apocalypse v, 9, 10. [3] Matt. xxi, 43; Titus ii, 12–14.

velopment than the one described in the Old Testament. It is certainly so in regard to the moral law, for 1) in connection with several precepts of the Decalogue, He insists not on the outward act of obedience only, but also and chiefly, on conformity of disposition to the principle embodied in the precept; as for example, when He prohibits not only murder, but hatred,[1] not only violent deeds, but also wicked passions;[2] 2) He raises the marriage relation to its primitive perfection;[3] and 3) He opens a new field to the generosity and love of regenerated men by insisting on the practice of deep humility, perfect purity of intention, and entire confidence in their heavenly Father; by bestowing praise on a free choice of the state of celibacy and virginity,[4] and suggesting the carrying out of the evangelical counsels.[5] This is likewise the case with the Ceremonial and Ritual aspects of the Old Covenant, inasmuch as He renders divine worship inwardly more perfect,[6] and even outwardly by the institution of a divine victim in the Holy Sacrifice; etc. Finally, as regards the constitutional law, Jesus raises likewise the Old Testament theocracy to a higher plane, when He invests the new hierarchy in God's kingdom with full authority for binding and loosing;[7] with the

[1] Matt. v, 21, 22.
[2] Matt. v, 27, 28.
[3] Matt. xix, 7 sqq.
[4] Matt. xix, 10–12.
[5] Matt. xix, 29.
[6] John v, 23, 24; etc.
[7] Matt. xviii, 18; etc.

truly divine powers of remitting sins,[1] of consecrating His body and blood; etc.; and also, when He requires for admission into the kingdom of God, a more perfect circumcision, that of the heart, and an entire renewal by the Holy Ghost. In fact, the whole order of things in the New Testament theocracy is raised to a condition so much more excellent than in the kingdom of God under the old dispensation, that even "the lesser" in the new kingdom is "greater" than Christ's precursor, of whom Jesus Himself says: "Among those that are born of woman, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist."[2]

Wonderful as is this declaration of Our Lord regarding the simple citizen's dignity in the new kingdom of God, it has had its fulfilment in every member of the visible Church of Christ. For by holy baptism, men are not only admitted to membership in an empire incomparably more extensive than the Old Testament theocracy, but truly become "the sons of God; and if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."[3] They are made "temples of the Holy Spirit,"[4] and members of a body which has the God-man crowned with heavenly glory for its Head.[5] They offer to the Almighty a Sacrifice of which all the sacrifices of the old Covenant were but weak and imperfect

[1] John xx, 23.
[2] Luke vii, 28.
[3] Rom. viii, 16, 17; I John iii, 1.
[4] I Cor. vi, 19.
[5] Ephes. i, 19–23; etc.

figures, and are allowed to share in the Victim immolated on the altar, and to eat of the very flesh and drink of the very blood of Christ.[1] They are bound to obey their pastors or visible rulers as being the representatives of the living God and ambassadors of Christ,[2] under the supreme visible pastor of the whole flock, Peter, upon whom "the Church is built," and to whom "the keys of the kingdom of heaven"[3] have been intrusted. They are also called to a purity and perfection of life practically unknown to the ancient people of God, and if they persevere unto the end, will receive an eternal weight of glory proportionate to their dignity and good deeds. Only in so far as they "live worthy of God" who "has transferred them into the kingdom of His Son,"[4] are they able to enjoy the peace and joy promised to the new "Israel of God,"[5] and to fulfil as a body, their wonderful mission of convincing the world of the truth and sublimity of their belief and worship.[6] In fact, should they fall far below the standard of perfection which has been set before them, viz.: that of God, of Christ, and His apostles, they can be cut off from the communion of saints here below,[7] and through all eternity,[8] so that

[1] I Cor. x, 16 sqq.; etc.
[2] Heb. xiii, 17; II Cor. v, 20; etc.
[3] Matt. xvi, 18, 19; John xxi, 15 sqq.
[4] Coloss. i, 13. [5] Galat. vi, 16.
[6] I Petr. i, 15 sqq.; ii, 11, 12; etc.
[7] I Cor. v. [8] I Cor. ix, 27.

it behooves them to "work out their salvation with fear and trembling."[1]

It is plain therefore that only in that visible Church of Christ, the Catholic Church, which alone goes back to the early days of Christianity, which has ever clung to the worship of the true God and of His true Son, Jesus Christ, and has spread it throughout the world in the course of centuries, do we find the actual realization of the New Testament theocracy. It is only with that visible society that the "new Covenant" has been entered into by the Almighty through the blood of His beloved Son, the old one having become antiquated, partly because of the infidelity of ancient Israel; partly also because of the very necessity of its transformation into a higher and more enduring covenant.[2]

A last feature of the New Testament theocracy remains to be mentioned, to complete our brief description of its chief characteristics. Its introduction among the children of men marked the beginning of an order of things which is not alone "new," but also "eternal."[3] If we listen to the Old Testament prophecy, the new Covenant it foretold was to be everlasting,[4] and just before the birth of Christ, who was to establish it, Gabriel announced that "of His kingdom there should be no end."[5] Again, no higher stage in the development of the

[1] Philip. ii, 12.
[2] Hebr. viii, 6–13.
[3] Heb. xiii, 20.
[4] Osee ii, 19.
[5] Luk. i, 33.

kingdom of God can be imagined here below, than the New Testament theocracy which gives it the very Son of God for eternal high priest,[1] and His very body and blood to be offered in sacrifice "till He come."[2] No new organization is to be looked for in order to carry on in the world the great work for which the Almighty had selected a people of His own, because the mission of teaching the true and pure worship of God to all nations has been intrusted to a body of men with whom He remains "all days, even to the consummation of the world."[3] It is true that in heaven this kingdom of God will receive a glorious consummation, but clearly this does not imply the setting up of a new theocracy in this world; and further, the glory which awaits faithful children of the Almighty on the last day, is not substantially different from the divine gifts already possessed by them. It is a manifestation of their glorious privilege of sharers in the divine nature, and a confirmation of it to them for all eternity; and not a bestowal upon them of new means either for their own sanctification or for that of others.[4]

In concluding, we may truly say that God's dealings with the children of men whom He has selected for His own people, will ever appear wonderful to the unbiased student of the Bible. The

[1] Heb. v, 1–9.
[2] I Cor. xi, 25.
[3] Matt. xxviii, 19, 20.
[4] I John, iii, 2; Rom. viii, 19.

closer he examines the sacred pages of both Testaments from this standpoint, the more also will he realize the supernatural character of the divine plan for man's salvation, which they gradually unfold. It is the finger of God always pointing onwards, which he will detect in the mysterious selection and providential guidance of the Jewish people, to which he was pleased to entrust the priestly mission of preserving His knowledge and worship for the rest of mankind. More particularly still, is it the same finger of God which he will recognize in the fulfilment, which the Old Testament theocracy meets with in the establishment of Christendom. The vast extent of "the kingdom of their father David," [1] which enthusiastic multitudes longed for when welcoming the Saviour into the Holy City on Palm Sunday, is clearly nothing as compared with the extent of the New Testament theocracy. The King, of the house of David, whom they expected to rule over their restored empire, was at best but a mere creature faithful to the requirements of the theocracy; whereas "the Son of David," "Christ the Lord," who "reigns in the house of Jacob forever," is no other than the "Word made flesh" and the true "Son of God." [2] Again, the suffering Servant of the Lord spoken of by the prophets of old as the One who would save His people from their sins by laying down His life for their sake,

[1] Mark xi, 10.

[2] Matt. xxvi, 63, 64; Luke xxii, 70; John ix, 35–38.

has received a wonderful fulfilment in the person and sufferings and death of the "Holy One of God,"[1] and the "Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." Finally, the glorious mission of God's chosen people to be to Him "a priestly kingdom and a holy nation," exists still for "the children of Abraham," that is for all the inheritors of his faith and devotion[2] who thus constitute the "Israel of God" as they are called by St. Paul,[3] and to whom St. Peter writes: "You are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people, that you may declare His virtues, Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light: who in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God . . . . Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims to refrain yourselves from carnal desires which war against the soul; having your conversation good among the Gentiles: that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by the good works, which they shall behold in you, glorify God in the day of visitation."[4]

A second conclusion which comes also very naturally out of our study of the Theocracy in the Bible, is that the visible Church of God was instituted by Our Lord Himself as His Kingdom, as that commonwealth of which He is to be the Head "unto the consummation of the world,"[5] and against which

[1] Mark i, 24.
[2] Galat. iii, 7.
[3] Gal. vi, 16.
[4] I Petr. ii, 9–12.
[5] Matt. xxviii, 20; Colos. i, 18.

the gates of hell shall never prevail,[1] so that at no future time can it be allowable to any one to leave it under any pretext.

A third and last conclusion likewise very important to bear in mind, is that while Christians rightly look upon themselves as under a theocratic rule, that is as belonging to a kingdom the real Head of which is God, they still remain in duty bound to obey their visible rulers, such as their lawful pastors in what appertains to religion, and the constituted public authorities in all civil matters. "Obey your prelates," says the inspired writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "and be subject to them; for they watch as being to render an account of your souls."[2] And St. Peter speaking of obedience to civil authorities, says: "Be ye subject to every human creature for God's sake, whether it be the King as excelling; or to governors as sent by him . . . . for so is the will of God . . . "[3] The reason of this is obvious to every well-informed student of the Theocracy in Holy Writ: first, the lawful pastors are the representatives of God, "appointed by the Holy Ghost to rule the Church;"[4] and secondly, while a theocratic rule is essentially compatible with any form of outward political organization, the civil rulers are also entrusted by God with the power of governing in temporal matters.

[1] Matt. xvi, 18.
[2] Heb. xiii, 17.
[3] I Petr. ii, 13-15.
[4] Acts xx, 28.

LECTURE VII.

THE BIBLE, A BOOK OF DEVOTION.

"The more closely one scrutinizes
the Sacred Scriptures of both Testaments, the greater
increase in faith and inward devotion will he derive
therefrom."—(*St. Cyprian*).

SYNOPSIS OF LECTURE VII.

The Bible, a Book of Devotion.

I. The Old Testament as a Book of Devotion:

1. Its General Design: to promote Man's union with God.
2. Chief Devotional Contents:
   - Pious Thoughts for Meditation.
   - Models of Prayer for Ordinary Actions.
   - Sacred Hymns for Solemn Occasions.
   - Examples of Holy Living.
   - Counsels of Perfection.
3. Liturgical Use in
   - the Old Testament Times.
   - the Christian Church.
4. Comparison with Sacred Books of other Ancient Nations.

II. The New Testament as a Book of Devotion:

1. Its Designs and Contents compared with those of the Old Testament.
2. Manifold Influence upon
   - Piety of Individuals.
   - Liturgical Prayers and Services.
   - Ordinary Devotional Books.
3. A Test of the Religious Character of Man and of Society.

Concluding Remarks.

LECTURE VII.

The Bible, a Book of Devotion.

"The more closely one scrutinizes the Sacred Scriptures of both Testaments, the greater increase in faith and inward devotion will he derive therefrom."—(*St. Cyprian*).

These words of one of the greatest bishops and martyrs of the African Church, point out distinctly one of the leading features of the Bible. They describe it as a book of devotion, that is as a volume to which the sincere Christian may always turn to revive his faith and increase his love, so as to draw nearer and closer to God. They vividly set forth a general aspect, which has been highly appreciated by God's loving children in all ages, and which, on that account, deserves our special attention. We shall therefore devote the present Lecture, to a rapid study of the Bible, as a Book of Devotion.

I. There is nowadays, a somewhat vague but widespread impression even among believers in the divine character of the Bible, that differently from the sacred writings of the New Testament, those of the Old Covenant cannot be of much, if indeed of any,

help towards increasing our inward devotion to God. It is often supposed that they so exclusively state and emphasize "the Law of Fear" whereby the Almighty preserved His knowledge and worship among "the stiff-necked" Jewish people[1] that they should not be considered as capable of promoting man's union with God through love, wherein the essence of devotion truly consists. And yet, this is at best, but an imperfect apprehension of the general object of the Sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament.

It is plain, for instance, that since these inspired books describe all that they relate,—the public events, phenomena of nature, good or bad deeds of private individuals and kings, etc.,—as wrought, or at least, as controlled, by an all-wise and loving Providence, they are really intended to train men's minds to see the finger of God in all that happens here below, and truly calculated to strengthen our faith while perusing them from the same standpoint. Beside thus raising man's mind to God by suggesting continually views of faith, the Old Testament clearly aims at centering man's affections in Him, whom it invariably represents as good and loving and merciful and compasionate; whom it oftentimes describes as the personal friend of His faithful servants;[2] and whose wonderful longing for the perfect love of His creatures, it solemnly proclaims in the

[1] Exod. xxxii, 9; Deuter. ix, 6; xxxi, 27; etc.

[2] Cfr. Gen. v, 24; xviii, 17; Wisdom vii, 27; Ecclesiasticus xliv, 16; xlv, 1; etc.

well-known command: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength."[1] It is clearly also for the purpose of promoting man's union with God, that the Decalogue is repeatedly inculcated in the same sacred writings,[2] for it prohibits not only evil deeds, but also guilty dispositions; and that the prophets of old insist so much on inward righteousness as the chief element in divine worship. It is with the same end in view that the covenant of the circumcision was given to Abraham and to his race, causing them to bear in their very flesh a distinct reminder of their strict duty to serve God faithfully all the days of their life;[3] and that, at a later date, the whole Jewish people was placed under a theocratic rule which bound them directly to the Almighty, made of them a "priestly kingdom and a holy nation," and obliged them to holy living because Jehovah their King, is infinitely holy. Finally, even the ritual law with its intricate system of purifications, sin, and trespass-offerings, etc., had for its object to keep among the people an abiding sense of the heinousness of everything wrong and unworthy; while by its thanksgiving offerings, by its weekly, monthly, and yearly festivals, it powerfully directed towards God, as the bestower of every good gift, the minds and hearts of

[1] Deuter. vi, 5; xi, 13, etc.
[2] Exod. xx, 1–17; Deuter. v, 6–21; etc.
[3] Gen. xvii, 9 sqq.

all successive generations. Whoever then, after the example of God's holy servants before and after Christ, peruses the sacred writings of the Old Covenant, bearing distinctly in mind the general purpose for which they were composed, can easily derive from them that increase of faith and love which will bring him nearer and closer to his heavenly Father.

As a strong confirmation of the general devotional design we have just ascribed to the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, we may appeal to their chief devotional contents. In the first place, throughout these sacred books there are scattered countless pious thoughts, which, if carefully gathered up and put in order, would make up an excellent book of meditation. The following are a few selections, taken from the various writings of the Old Testament indiscriminately, to illustrate their great power to raise man's mind and heart to God, to deter from vice and incite to virtue:

The Universal Presence and Knowledge of God.[1]

O LORD! thou hast searched me and known me!
Thou knowest my sitting-down and my rising-up;
Thou understandest my thoughts from afar!
Thou winnowest my path and my lying down,
And art acquainted with all my ways!
For before the word is upon my tongue,
Behold, O LORD! thou knowest it altogether!
Thou besettest me behind and before,
And layest thine hand upon me!

[1] Ps. cxxviii (in Hebr. cxxxix), 1–12.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
It is high, I cannot reach to it!

Whither shall I go from thy spirit,
And whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend into heaven, thou art there,
If I descend to the netherworld, behold, thou art there!
If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there shall thy hand lead me,
And thy right hand shall hold me!
If I say: "Let deep darkness cover me,
And the light about me become night!"
Even the darkness hideth not from thee,
And the night shineth as the day.

Man's humble frame of mind before God.[1]

Shall man be just before God,
And shall mortal man be pure before his Maker?
Behold He putteth no trust in His servants,
And His very angels He chargeth with defects:
How much more them that dwell in houses of clay,
Whose foundation is in the dust?

Desire of union with God.[2]

Whom have I in heaven but thee,
And beside thee, whom do I care for on earth?
Though my flesh and my heart fail,
God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.

. . . . . .

It is good for me to draw near to God,
To put my trust in the Lord God.

[1] Job iv, 17–19.—Cfr. Abraham's words in Gen. xviii, 27: "Seeing I have once begun, I will speak, to my Lord, who am but dust and ashes."

[2] Ps. lxxii (Hebr. lxxiii), 25, 26, 28.—Cfr. Ps. xli (Heb. xlii).

Perfect Resignation to God's Holy Will.[1]

"The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; as it hath pleased the LORD, so is it done; blessed be the name of the LORD! . . . . . ." "We have received good things at the hand of God, why should we not receive evil?"

The Two great Commandments of Love.

"Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength" (Deuter. vi, 5, xi, 13).—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor like thyself" (Levit. xix, 18).

Childlike Confidence in God.[2]

Look at the generations of old, and see:
Who trusted in the Lord, and was confounded?
Or who abode in His fear and was forsaken?
Or who called upon Him, and He overlooked him?
For the Lord is compassionate and merciful,
And forgiveth sins, and saveth in time of affliction.

Loving attention to God.

To Thee I lift up my eyes,
O Thou, who dwelleth in heaven!
Behold! as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master,
As the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress;
So do our eyes look to the LORD, our God,
Until He have mercy on us (Ps. cxxii, 1, 2).

I lift up my eyes to the mountains:
Whence cometh my help?
My help cometh from the LORD,
Who made heaven and earth (Ps. cxx, 1, 2).

[1] Job i, 21; ii, 10.—Cfr. also I Machab. iii, 60: "Nevertheless as it shall be the will of God in heaven, so be it done!"

[2] Ecclesiasticus ii, 11–13.—Cfr. Pss. x; xxii; xxx; etc.; etc.

To these few selections which refer directly to God's infinite perfections, and to man's manifold relation to Him, many others might easily be added describing in no less striking and suggestive a manner, either the divine attributes of perfect holiness,[1] infinite power,[2] and wisdom,[3] and goodness, and mercy,[4] etc., or the corresponding duties on our part, such as feelings of awe,[5] and admiration,[6] and thanksgiving,[7] and obedience,[8] etc. But we proceed at once to set forth a few of those passages the noble and pure teachings of which, make the perusal of the Sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament "profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice, that the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work."[9] Of this description are clearly the following sentences, which point out in a pithy manner, the providential purpose of our various trials here below: "Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee;"[10]

> Son, when thou settest out to serve the Lord,
> Prepare thy soul for temptation . . . .
> Gold and silver are tried in the fire,
> But acceptable man in the furnace of humiliation.[11]

[1] Kings ii, 2; Ecclesiasticus xlvi, 6; Isai. vi, 3; etc.
[2] Ecclesiasticus i, 8; Ps. xxxii, 9; etc.
[3] Ps. cxlvi, 5; Baruch iii, 12.
[4] Ps. cxxxv; Ecclesiasticus xviii, 12; etc., etc.
[5] Isai. iii, 5; etc.
[6] Esther xv, 17; Ps. civ. 2; Tobias xii, 20, 22.
[7] Tobias ii, 14; etc.
[8] I Kings xv, 22; etc.; etc.
[9] II Tim. iii, 15, 16.
[10] Tobias xii, 13.
[11] Ecclesiasticus ii, 1, 5. Cfr. Wisdom iii, 2–6.

Of this description too, are the following passages which inculcate powerful motives for avoiding sins or correcting vices more or less directly opposed to our union with the Almighty:

The proud man is an abomination to the Lord,
He will assuredly not go unpunished (Prov. xvi, 5).

Pride goeth before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before a fall (Prov. xvi, 18).

He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance, will increase: this also is vanity. . . There is a grievous evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept to the hurt of the owner: these riches perish by evil adventure, and nothing comes down to his son. As he came forth from his mother's womb, naked, shall he go again as he came, and shall take nothing away with him of his labor (Ecclesiastes v, 9, 12–14).

Drive away sadness far from thee,
For sadness hath killed many,
And there is no profit therein.
Envy and anger shorten a man's days,
And anxiety bringeth age before the time.[1]

The desire of the sluggard slays him,
For his hands refuse to labor.[2]

More instructive still and useful to promote man's union with God, are passages, which, like the following, set forth direct lessons regarding the practice of exalted virtue:

The patient man is better than the valiant,
And he who rules himself, than he who taketh a city.
(Prov. xvi, 32.)

[1] Ecclesiasticus xxx, 24–26. [2] Prov. xxi, 25.

Who dare ascend the hill of the LORD?
And who dare stand in His holy place?
He that hath clean hands and a pure heart,
Who doeth not lift up his soul unto vanity,
And never swears deceitfully (Ps. xxiii, 4, 5).

He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth to the Lord,
And his good deed will He pay him again (Prov. xix, 17).

Prayer is good with fasting, and alms with righteousness better than wealth and unrighteousness; better it is to give alms than to lay up treasures of gold. Almsgiving delivereth from death, and the same purgeth away sins; those who give alms and practise righteousness shall be filled with life (Tobias xii, 8, 9).

They that fear the Lord, will not disobey His words;
And they that love Him, will keep strictly His ways.
They that fear the Lord, will seek His good pleasure;
And they that love Him, will observe fully His law.
They that fear the Lord, will prepare their hearts,
And humble their souls in His sight.[1]
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
Honor thy father, in work, and word, and all patience.
. . . . . .
The greater thou art, the more humble thyself
And thou shalt find grace before God.[2]

Finally, throughout the Old Testament, the attentive reader will also find ample materials for useful meditation on the fundamental truths of revealed religion, such as creation, original sin, mortal sin, death, judgment;[3] etc. So that if the

[1] Ecclesiasticus ii, 18–20. [2] Ecclesiasticus iii, 9, 20.
[3] Cfr. opening chaps. of Genesis; and also, Wisdom, chaps. iv, v; Ecclesiasticus xli; Ps. i; etc.

devotional character of a book be estimated by its power for suggesting pious thoughts that will raise men's minds and hearts to God, there can be no doubt that the Old Testament should ever be regarded as a book the contents of which can contribute greatly to the increase of our devotion.

Together with these sentiments so well calculated to promote our union with our Maker and Sanctifier, the sacred writings of the Old Covenant contain several models of prayer, which supply beautiful formulas for expressing, and consequently also, for increasing our private devotion. In no prayer-book, for instance, do we find a simpler, and at the same time, more devotional morning prayer than the fifth Psalm with its sincere accents of humility, trust in God, and desire for righteousness. Its opening strophes run as follows:

Give ear to my words, O LORD,
Give heed to my meditation!
Listen to the voice of my supplication, my king and my God!
For to thee do I pray.
In the morning, thou shalt hear my voice, O LORD,
In the morning, I come before thee, and keep watch.

Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness;
The unrighteous man dwelleth not with thee.
The haughty shall not stand in thy sight;
Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.
Thou destroyest those who utter falsehood;
The man of blood and deceit the LORD abhorreth.

But I, through thy great mercy, will enter thy house;
In thy fear, will I worship toward thy holy temple.

Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness, because of my enemies;
Make thy path straight before my face!

. . . . . .

More beautiful still and devotional, as an evening prayer, is the fourth Psalm, which the Christian Church places on our lips at the close of her daily service of praise to God, and which concludes with these words of childlike trust:

In peace will I lie down and sleep;
Thou alone, O LORD! makest me dwell in safety.

Nothing, in any language, will ever set forth better than the "Penitential" Psalms vi, l, etc., the depth of sorrow for sin, which one should experience while contrasting his manifold ungratefulness with God's infinite mercy. Nothing, in any language, will ever describe with equal truth and power, as other sacred hymns found also in the Book of Psalms, that variety of pious feelings,—of unshaken confidence, tender love, ardent zeal, desire for greater holiness, etc.,—for the expression of which, books of devotion usually vie with one another in supplying new and excellent formulas.

Beside the Psalter, which is the book of devotion *par excellence* in the Old Testament, several inspired writings composed before Christ's coming, contain likewise, though much more sparingly, beautiful and devotional models of prayer. Here is a part, for instance, of the earnest request for "Wisdom," which we read in the ninth chapter of the book which bears that name:

"O God of my fathers, and Lord of mercy, who hast made all things by thy word, and by thy wisdom hath appointed man, that he should have dominion over the creatures that were formed by thee . . ., give me wisdom,—her that sitteth by thee on thy throne, and reject me not from among thy children; for I am thy servant and the son of thy handmaid, a man weak and short-lived, and falling short of the understanding of judgment and laws . . . With thee is Wisdom, which knoweth thy works . . . and which understandeth what is pleasing in thy eyes, and what is right according to thy commandments. Send her forth out of thy holy heavens, and from the throne of thy majesty bid her come, that being present with me she may toil with me, and that I may know what is well-pleasing before thee . . . For who among men shall know the counsel of God? or who can conceive what the Lord willeth? For the thoughts of mortals are vacillating, and our devices prone to fail. For the corruptible body weigheth down the soul, and the earthly frame presseth down the mind that museth upon many things."[1]

The prayer ascribed to the prophet Jeremias in the book of Lamentations,[2] is a masterpiece of elegiac poetry, and also a most touching model of prayer in public calamities; while that put on the lips of Tobias, in the sacred book which bears his name, is very well suited for one sorely tried by private affliction.[3] In Isaias (xxxviii, 9–20), the canticle of Ezechias may naturally serve as a hymn of thanksgiving for recovery from sickness; in Daniel (xiii, 42, 43), the short prayer of Susanna, unjustly sentenced to death, may also be used by anyone under false accusations; and finally, that of Nehemias

[1] Wisdom ix, 1 sqq.
[2] Chap. V.
[3] Tobias iii, 1–6.

in the second book of the Machabees,[1] is, as we might say, a beautiful "symbol of faith," as well as an humble petition that a public sacrifice may be acceptable to the divine Majesty.

As might naturally be expected in connection with the sacred books of a theocratic people like the Jews, there are in the writings of the Old Testament numerous sacred hymns for solemn occasions. Most of these are embodied in the Psalter, the great hymn-book of the Jewish Church, and the particular occasion which gave rise to some of them may still be gathered either from their title, or from their contents.[2] But even outside of the book of Psalms, there are some inspired canticles manifestly composed, or at least easily available, for great solemnities; and as being of this description we shall simply mention the magnificent canticle of Moses, at the close of the book of Deuteronomy;[3] the canticle of Anna, recorded in the second book of Kings;[4] and that of the three Children in the furnace of Babylon, which is found in the book of Daniel.[5]

Side by side with all the excellent means of suggesting and expressing feelings of devotion thus far spoken of, the sacred records of the Old Covenant supply another which has ever been considered as most helpful for promoting genuine devotion to

[1] II Machab. i, 24 sqq.
[2] Cfr. Pss. xviii; xxii; lxxviii; etc.
[3] Deuter. xxxii, 1–43.
[4] II Kings (or Samuel) ii
[5] Daniel iii, 51–90.

God. We refer to the numerous examples of holy living, which are set forth in these inspired writings, and from which the early Fathers of the Church were wont to draw powerful lessons for the edification of the flock of Christ. In Abraham, for instance, the Jews of old and the Christians of all ages, have always found a living model of such moral virtues as unselfishness,[1] nobility of disposition,[2] uprightness and courtesy in his dealings with others,[3] etc.; and more particularly, the pattern of the most implicit, practical and generous faith, as may indeed be perceived from his constant sense of the presence of an unseen God, raising Him altars whithersoever he goes;[4] from his trustful love and deep veneration for Jehovah;[5] and especially from his unlimited devotion to God's service: leaving at once and repeatedly everything,[6] believing God's word notwithstanding all the suggestions of reason to the contrary,[7] willing to sacrifice his dearly beloved son,[8] and teaching his family and posterity to be faithful to Jehovah.[9] Hardly less admirable is the character of the patriarch Joseph. As a boy, he has the most vivid horror for the evil done by his brothers,[10] and as a youth he resists with heroic constancy the repeated and pressing solicitations of his

[1] Genesis xiii, 8, 9; xiv, 23; etc. [2] Gen. xiv. 20.
[3] Gen. xxiii, etc. [4] Gen. xii, 7, 8; xiii, 4, 18; etc.
[5] Gen. xvii, 3; xviii, 27; xxiv, 7. [6] Hebr. xi, 8; etc
[7] Gen. xv, 5, 6; Rom. iv, 19. [8] Gen. xxii.
[9] Gen. xviii, 19. [10] Gen. xxxvii, 2.

master's wife, saying: "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"[1] Cast into prison, he exhibits great power of endurance, and when raised to the highest rank in the State, he shows himself worthy of that exalted dignity by his modesty, no less than by his energetic efforts to promote in the most effective manner the welfare of his adoptive countrymen. His tenderness of heart is revealed in a variety of ways, such as the tears he sheds at the first visit of his brothers after they had sold him, his filial respect and devotion for his aged father, etc.; and his living faith is disclosed in the following remarkable words to his brothers: "God sent me before you into Egypt for your preservation. . . . Not by your counsel, was I sent hither, but by the will of God, etc."[2] Moses' public career is well summed up in these words of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "He was strong as seeing Him that is invisible."[3] Because he considered himself as "the servant of Jehovah,"[4] he undertook the liberation of Israel, and dealt with Pharao precisely as bidden by Jehovah. As a faithful servant set over the house of his divine Master,[5] he was ever attentive to look up to Him for guidance and carried out constantly His least directions. It is God's honor and glory that he has in view when he subdues his own quick temper so as to become "the meekest of

[1] Gen. xxxix, 6 sqq. [2] Gen. xlv. 5, 7, 8.
[3] Heb. xi, 27. [4] Deuter. xxxiv, 5; Numb. xii, 7; etc.
[5] Heb. iii, 2.

men,"[1] and when he loves the chosen people with such a fatherly affection as to offer himself a willing victim for their sins, and to intercede with God in their behalf when his own authority and devotion had been set at naught by Israel.[2] He is not jealous of the prophetical gifts Jehovah may bestow upon others,[3] and when the time has come he willingly passes over his sons, and assigns to a stranger his succession in the leadership of the Jewish nation.[4]

Other examples of holy living could easily be pointed out, for they abound throughout the inspired writings of the Old Testament. They are recorded not only in connection with such great leaders and prophets as Josue, Samuel, Elias, Jeremias, Daniel, etc.; but also in regard to such humbler members of the chosen people as Samuel's mother, the widow of Sarephta, Tobias and Sara, Susanna, etc. As, however, such edifying examples can easily be noticed by every attentive reader of the Sacred Text; and as they could moreover, but briefly, and in consequence only imperfectly, be set forth here, we prefer simply to refer to them in a general manner. But their great power for edification was distinctly realized by the sacred writers of Wisdom[5] and Ecclesiasticus,[6] before Christ, and of the Epistle to the Hebrews,[7] after Him, as also by the holy Fathers and ecclesiastical

[1] Numb. xii, 3. [2] Exod. xxxii, 31, 32.
[3] Numb. xi, 29. [4] Deuter. xxxi, 23; xxxiv, 9.
[5] Wisdom x. [6] Ecclesiasticus xliv–l. [7] Hebr. xi.

writers of a later date; and it is chiefly to this element which pervades the contents of the Old Testament, that we can apply these words of St. Cyprian: "The more closely one scrutinizes the Sacred Scriptures . . . the greater increase in faith and inward devotion will he derive therefrom."[1]

It is true that, nowhere in the sacred books of the Old Covenant, do we find stated explicitly what is known among us as the "counsels of perfection," and that consequently, they seem to be lacking in what is calculated to promote the highest union between man and his Maker. Yet, after it has been granted that in this regard, the Old Testament stands on a lower level than the New, it should be borne in mind, that even in the former dispensation, God's loving desire of a perfect union with His rational creature, was made known to man. Such a longing on the part of God, for the perfect love of man, was certainly implied in the first of all commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength." Again, it was clearly to the practice of real perfection that the Almighty called His servant Abraham, when He bade him: "Go forth out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and out of thy father's house and come into the land which I shall show thee;"[2] and more par-

[1] "Book of the Testimonies against the Jews," Dedicatory letter to Quirinus. [2] Gen. xii, 1.

ticularly when He said to him: "Walk before Me, and be perfect."[1] Nor was this call to perfection,—which indeed appears essential to a manner of service worthy of God's infinite holiness,—ever entirely lost sight of in the Old Testament. Thus in the book of Josue,[2] the whole people is exhorted to "fear the Lord and serve Him with a perfect and most sincere heart;" in the first book of Paralipomenon,[3] David bids Solomon "to serve God with a perfect heart and willing mind;" while, in the second book of the Machabees,[4] the Jews of Jerusalem pray that those of Egypt may be given by God "a heart to worship Him, and to do His will with a great heart and willing mind."

The foregoing remarks on the chief devotional contents of the Old Testament, aid us to realize how God's loving servants have ever looked upon it as a powerful means to grow in holiness, and drawn from it an increase in faith and inward devotion. They also help us to understand why it has been used so extensively in the public services in the Old Testament times and in the Christian Church. Some parts of it, such as the Psalms, appeared so well fitted for promoting man's union with God, that they were naturally, and

[1] Gen. xvii, 1.—In Gen. vi, 9 it is said of Noe: "Noe was a just and perfect man in his generations, he walked with God."

[2] Josue xxiv, 14. [3] I Paralip. (or Chronicles) xxviii, 9.

[4] II Machab. i, 3.

probably from the first, used for liturgical purposes, whether in the daily or in the more solemn services of the chosen people. Other parts, such as selections from the Pentateuch, and from the Prophetical writings, were also introduced into the religious services of the Jews, the former for the direct purpose of securing a better fulfilment of the divine Law; the latter, chiefly for keeping alive the Messianic expectations of the Hebrew race. From the very nature of the case, it is impossible to define the precise date at which these various contents of the Old Testament were adopted in the sacred liturgy of the Jewish nation, for the Psalms were composed only gradually in the course of ages, and the complete system of public readings from the Law and the Prophets required a considerable period of time before being fully organized. But once introduced into the public services, either of the Temple of Jerusalem, or of the synagogues scattered everywhere, they proved manifestly so helpful for preserving the people's faith and devotion to God, that at no time was there any question of doing away with their liturgical use. At the beginning of the Christian era, this liturgical use of the Old Testament was in full vigor among the Jews,[1] and it is from them that the early Church inherited it.[2] Ever since the beginning of Christianity, the

[1] Cfr. Acts xv, 21; Luke iv, 17.
[2] Luke xxiv, 53; Acts iv, 24.

service of praise and thanksgiving and love in the words of the Psalmists of Israel, and the public reading of selections from the Law and the Prophets, have been kept up in the Catholic Church; and the chief difference nowadays between the Catholic and the Jewish use of the Old Testament in religious services consists in the fact that the Church has gradually adopted for her liturgy, extracts from other sacred writings of the Old Covenant, such as Proverbs, Wisdom, Tobias, Ecclesiasticus, etc.

Thus then, the principal motive for which the inspired books written before Christ, have been so extensively and so constantly used in the public services of the Jews and Christians, is no other than the devotional power of their chief contents. It has always been felt that, in a variety of ways, they greatly contribute to raise man's mind and heart to God, and to render closer and closer his union with his Maker and Sanctifier.

This wonderful excellence of the chief devotional contents of the Old Testament, appears very particularly when they are compared with those parts of the sacred books of India, China, and Persia, which these ancient nations have used from the remotest ages in their public services. They are clearly far superior to those of India and China, in which "the worshipper exhausts the resources of language in expressing his sense of the greatness, the excellence, the wisdom, the power, the

goodness of his God, and heaps upon him titles of reverence,"[1] but hardly ever speaks of his own guilt, and never supplicates for improvement in the future. Very superior too, do they appear to the Zend-Avesta, although this Persian sacred book is full of such ardent prayers for goodness, as the following: "O Lord of good things . . . . let me know fulness of life, purity and immortality;" "May power and strength come to me, that I may maintain purity in thought, in word and in action!" For, while in the Persian books we find adoration, reverence, profound sincerity and a longing for help from on high, it is only in the Old Testament writings, that we meet with the elements of a happy trust, and the freedom of childlike intercourse, and that living conviction of personal intercourse with a God not only to be worshipped, but also to be imitated in His holiness; etc.; etc., which alone are capable of appealing powerfully to what is highest and noblest in our nature, and of promoting a closer and closer union between us and our heavenly Father.

II. The devotional features just pointed out as securing to the Old Testament such great superiority over the sacred books of other ancient nations, are naturally met with in the New Testament, the continuation and fulfilment of the Old, in this, as well as in other respects. Only in the writings of

[1] Jas. Freeman Clarke, *Ten Great Religions*, part ii, p. 229 (18th edit., 1898).

the New Covenant, these devotional features appear in greater number, and of a higher order, as may easily be shown by a brief review of their design and contents as compared with those of the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament.

Anyone, ever so little acquainted with the sacred writings of the New Testament, will readily admit that their general purpose is, even more directly and positively than that of the books of the Old Covenant, to promote man's union with the Almighty. While the Old Testament abounds in social and political regulations, in promises of temporal well-being for private individuals and of national aggrandizement for the chosen people, the New Testament invariably describes its Institutor, its legislation, its whole spirit, as having but one purpose, viz.: that of bringing men nearer and closer to God. Jesus came into the world "not to judge the world, but that the world might be saved by Him,"[1] and that men "might have life and have it more abundantly:"[2] indeed the wonderful mystery of the Incarnation which united so intimately man's nature with the divine in Christ's person, is repeatedly described as the pattern of the close union at which every believer should aim here below.[3] The Law promulgated by Our Lord and by the New Testament writers, is one of righteousness incomparably higher than "the justice of the

[1] John iii, 17. [2] John x, 10.
[3] John vi, 54, 58; xiv, 9, 20, 23; xvii, 20–26; etc.

Scribes and the Pharisees;"[1] one distinctly of inward perfection;[2] in fact, one of perfection truly divine, for we are told: "Be you perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect."[3] But more particularly, is the whole spirit inculcated by the New Testament, of a higher order than that of the Old Covenant: "You have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear," writes St. Paul to the Christians of his time, "but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father)."[4] God, the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, is truly our Father;[5] and of all fathers, He is the most perfect, the most loving, the most merciful, the most powerful, etc.: He therefore desires that we should implicitly trust His all-wise Providence,[6] go to Him in all our needs as loving children go to their father,[7] and very particularly "be followers of Him as most dear children."[8] So that, though it is quite true that even the New Testament bids us repeatedly, and at times, very emphatically, to fear God and His eternal judgment,[9] yet it suggests usually the higher motive of love as the one which belongs particularly to "the perfect law of liberty" of which St. James speaks,[10] and also as the one best calcu-

[1] Matt. v, 20. [2] Matt. v, 21 sqq. [3] Matt. v, 48.
[4] Rom. viii, 15. [5] Matt. vi, 9; I John iii, 1; etc.
[6] Matt. vi, 32. [7] Mark xi, 24; etc. [8] Ephesians v, 1.
[9] Cfr. Matt. x, 28; Coloss. iii, 22; Luke xii, 47; I Cor. ix, 27; etc. [10] James i, 25.

lated to bring about a close union with the God of love.[1]

As regards the chief devotional contents of the New Testament, they naturally partake of the higher character of its general purpose, and are better calculated than those of the Old Covenant, to promote man's intimate union with his Maker and Sanctifier. This is the case for instance, with countless texts both of the Gospels and of the Epistles, the power of which for suggesting pious thoughts and increasing inward devotion, becomes evident at the mere quoting of them. Of this description, are plainly the following:

I. *Regarding God.*

God is charity: and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him (I John, iv, 16).

God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son: that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting (Jno. iii, 16).

God is a spirit: and they that adore Him, must adore Him in spirit and in truth (Jno. iv, 24).

God, Who is rich in mercy, for His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ . . . . (Ephesians ii, 4, 5).

If God is for us, who is against us? He hath spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not with Him, give us all things? . . . . I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor

[1] I John iv, 18.

things present, nor things to come . . . ., nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, Our Lord (Rom. viii, 31, 32, 38, 39).

Let us therefore love God, because God first hath loved us (I Jno. iv, 19).

II. *Regarding Christ.*

I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall not hunger; and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst . . . . All that the Father giveth to Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me, I will not cast out (Jno. vi, 35, 37).

I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life (Jno. viii, 12).

He that sent Me, is with Me, and He hath not left Me alone, for I do always the things that please Him (John viii, 29).

And stretching forth his hand towards His disciples, He said: Behold my mother and my brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of my Father that is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister and mother (Matt. xii, 49, 50).

Come to Me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls; for my yoke is sweet and my burden light (Matt. xi, 28–30).

Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am! (Jno. viii, 58).

I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live; and every one that liveth and believeth in Me, shall not die for ever (Jno. xi, 25, 26).

I am the good Shepherd, and I know mine, and mine know Me as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And other sheep I have, that

are not of this fold; them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd (Jno. x, 14–17).

And Jesus wept! the Jews therefore said: behold! how He loved him (Jno. xi, 35, 36).

Of this description too, are the following very striking denunciations of sins or vices opposed to man's union with God:

Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap; for he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption (Galatians vi, 7, 8).

Know you not that the unjust shall not possess the Kingdom of God? Do not err: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers .... nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor railers, nor extortioners, shall possess the kingdom of God (I Cor. vi, 9, 10).

He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a mill-stone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea. Wo to the world because of scandals .... Wo to the man by whom the scandal cometh (Matt. xviii, 6, 7).

Whosoever shall deny Me before men, shall be denied before the Angels of God (Luke xii, 9).

If any man hath not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel (I Tim. v, 8).

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot; but because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth (Apocal. iii, 15, 16).

Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches, to enter into the Kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to

pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God (Mark x, 24, 25).

God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble (I Petr. v, 5).

If any man think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain (James i, 26).

What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? (Matt. xvi, 26).

It is, however, in those passages which lay down the conditions necessary to be Christ's true disciples, or inculcate the practice of exalted virtue, that the superiority of the devotional contents of the New Testament over those of the Old, more particularly appear. We shall give only a few illustrations of this point.

He (Jesus) said to all: If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me (Luke ix, 23).

He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not up his cross, and followeth Me, is not worthy of Me (Matt. x, 37, 38).

Enter ye in at the narrow gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life, and few there are that find it! (Matt. vii, 13, 14).

If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come follow Me (Matt. xix, 21).

I say to you: Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you, that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust. For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans this? . . . (Matt. v, 44–46).

Be you also ready: for at what hour you think not, the Son of man will come (Luke xii, 40).

We ought always to pray and not to faint (Luke xviii, 1).

Put ye on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if any have a complaint against another, even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so do you also. But above all these things have charity which is the bond of perfection. . . . . All whatsoever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him (Coloss. iii, 12–14, 17).

Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. xviii, 4).

I would have you without solicitude. He that is without a wife, is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God; but he that is with a wife, is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife. The same difference exists between the wife and the virgin: the virgin thinketh on the things of the Lord, that she may be holy in body and in spirit; but she that is married thinketh on the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your profit, not to cast a snare upon you; but for that which is decent and which may give you power to attend upon the Lord, without impediment (I Cor. vii, 32–35.

Servants, obey in all things your masters, according to the flesh, not serving to the eye, as pleasing men, but in simplicity of heart, fearing God. Whatsoever you do, do it from the

heart, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that you shall receive of the Lord the reward of inheritance. Serve ye the Lord Christ (Colossians iii, 22–24).

Masters, do to your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that you also have a master in heaven (Coloss. iv, 1).

Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God (I Corinthians x, 31).

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you (Matt. vi, 33).

Beside these, and other such, direct exhortations even to virtues unknown to the Jews of old, the New Testament supplies most excellent materials for meditation in those discourses, miracles, and parables of Our Lord which the gospels record somewhat in detail. The Sermon on the Mount with its sublime beatitudes, for instance, has always been, and will forever remain, a source of light and devotion for the attentive reader; and the same thing must be said in connection with such other discourses of Christ as the one He delivered in the synagogue of Capharnaum concerning the Holy Eucharist,[1] and the one He addressed to His disciples after the last Supper.[2] The narratives of His best known miracles—such as the stilling of the storm,[3] the healing of the centurion's servant,[4] the raising to life of Lazarus,[5] the multiplications of loaves,[6] etc., etc.,

[1] John vi, 25–72.
[2] John xiv–xvi.
[3] Luke viii, 22–25.
[4] Matt. viii, 5–13.
[5] John xi, 1–53.
[6] Mark viii, 1–9; John vi, 1–15.

are most suggestive of feelings of admiration and love and thanksgiving to God. In like manner such beautiful parables as those of the Good Shepherd,[1] of the Sower,[2] of Dives and Lazarus,[3] of the Pharisee and the Publican,[4] of the Prodigal Son,[5] of the Good Samaritan,[6] etc., etc., are an inexhaustible source of light and strength to any one who ponders on them.

More instructive still and calculated to promote our union with God, is Our Lord's biography as sketched in the evangelical narratives. With charming simplicity, they set before us the words, and feelings, and deeds, both private and public, of the Son of God, made man for our sakes; and the more we reflect on the beauty and completeness of His character, the more also are we moved to admiration and love for His person. We instinctively feel that not only "never did man speak like this man,"[7] but also that never did any man move among men like unto Him in simplicity, humility, disinterestedness, charity, patience, meekness, hatred of sin, compassion for the sinners and the weak and the poor, submission to God's holy will, constant prayer, absolute dependence on His Father, etc., etc. We further realize that by His personal practice of poverty, celibacy, obedience to all those set in

[1] John x, 1–16.
[2] Matt. xiii, 1–23.
[3] Luke xvi, 20–31.
[4] Luke xviii, 9–14.
[5] Luke xv, 1–32.
[6] Luke x, 25–37.
[7] John vii, 46.

authority over Him, He has made possible, yea desirable and easy, the taking up and generous discharge of the evangelical counsels of perfection. Whether we contemplate Him in the crib of Bethlehem, in the workshop of Nazareth, in the synagogues of Galilee, in His triumphal entry into the Holy City, in the garden of Olives, on the Cross, or after His resurrection, we find him always and everywhere the perfect pattern "of the new man, who according to God, is created in justice and holiness of truth."[1] It is plain that the more the character of the "Lamb of God," of the "Master," of the "Son of David, the King of Israel," of the "Son of Man," of the "Son of God," is studied and dwelt upon, the more also is it seen to exhibit wonderfully combined together "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever modest, whatsoever just, whatsoever holy, whatsoever lovely,"[2] and to appear in all points worthy of our contemplation and imitation.

Together with this divine exemplar of all perfections, the New Testament furnishes us in the character of the "Doctor of the Gentiles in faith and truth,"[3] the faithful picture of the perfection which was reached by one who trod generously in the footsteps of Jesus. The Apostle's character is made known to us in almost all its aspects by the narrative of the book of the Acts and by his own writings, and there is hardly one feature of it which we would

[1] Galat. iv, 24. [2] Philippians iv, 8. [3] I Tim. ii, 7.

feel not to deserve our full admiration. We shall point out here only the principal traits of the man, of the Christian, and of the Apostle.[1]

Born in Tarsus from Jewish parentage, he was deeply attached to the city of his birth and to the race from which he sprang;[2] but this did not prevent him from prizing his right of Roman citizenship and desiring to behold other cities besides his native place, and even besides Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judaism and of early Christianity. Frank, sincere, noble-minded, he could not help feeling indignant at the sight of everything low, insincere or selfish,[3] and with his keen sense of what was fair and just, he promptly resented anything that looked like a denial of justice[4] or an underhand interference with his rights.[5] No one can help admiring his singleness of purpose, his strong will and his unflagging energy, so wonderfully combined with tact and courtesy.[6] Endowed with a deeply affectionate heart, he vividly appreciated whatever kindness and service were shown to him;[7] keenly felt the ingratitude or desertion of his friends or fellow-workers,[8] and evinced the liveliest interest and tenderest love

[1] The description of St. Paul's character which follows, is borrowed from the "Outlines of New Testament History," by the present writer, p. 327 sqq.

[2] Acts xxi, 39.

[3] Cfr. Acts xiii, 8 sq.; xv, 38 sq.; Galat. ii, 1 sq.

[4] Acts xxiii, 1–3; xxv, 9–11.

[5] Galat. ii, 3–5.

[6] Galat. ii, 2 sqq.; Acts xxi, 39 sq.; xxvi, 24–29.

[7] II Tim. i, 16–18; Rom. xvi, 2.

[8] II Tim. i, 15; iv, 9.

for his faithful friends.[1] Finally, to a quick, penetrating and versatile mind was joined in him a wonderful power of adaptability to the most varied circumstances of time and place.

Of course, all the precious natural qualities of mind and heart which may be noticed in Saul were raised to a higher order of perfection when, shaking off the yoke of Judaism with its exclusiveness and that of Pharisaism with its bigotry, he "put on Christ Jesus," the Redeemer of all nations. Furthermore, new virtues were implanted in his soul, and under the influence of divine grace, ever fruitful in him,[2] developed into a Christian life the perfection of which can hardly be imagined, since it made of Paul so faithful a copy of Christ that he could write under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost: "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ,"[3] and again: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me."[4] Great indeed was his compassion for the poor his forbearance towards his enemies, and his condescension toward the weak; greater still were his humility, which made him look upon himself as less than the least of the believers, and his love of bodily mortification and of the cross,[5] having constantly before his mind the uncertainty of salvation[6] and the absolute necessity of union

[1] Philip. ii, 27; Rom. xvi, 13; etc. [2] I Cor. xv, 10.
[3] I Cor. xi, 1. [4] Galat. ii, 20. [5] II Cor. iv, 10 sq.
[6] I Cor. ix, 27.

to Christ's sufferings here below to share in Christ's glory hereafter.[1] But what was foremost in his thoughts and in his affections was the love of the Son of God, "Who had loved him and had given Himself up for him." It was this love of Christ which was the great stimulus of his entire life,[2] which caused him to challenge all creatures to be able to separate him from Christ, the supreme object of his affections;[3] to long for death in order to be forever with Christ;[4] to be ready to die for the sake of His name;[5] and finally, to exclaim: "If anyone love not Our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema!"[6]

But it is especially when we consider St. Paul as an apostle that we are struck with admiration for his lofty character. Through the purest love for God and for souls[7] he looks upon himself as under obligation to preach the Gospel to all: "to the Greeks and to the barbarians, to the wise and to the unwise," to the Jews and to the Gentiles. To fulfil this obligation he sacrifices every other purpose in life, gives up all that he has, and is ready to lay down his very life. For this same end, he undertakes the most dangerous journeys by sea and by land, exposes himself to all kinds of persecutions, sufferings and privations,

[1] Rom. viii, 17. [2] II Cor. v, 14.
[3] Rom. viii, 35–39; Philip. iii, 20.
[4] Philip. i, 23. [5] Acts xxi, 13.
[6] I Cor. xvi, 22. [7] II Cor. xii, 14.

becomes "to the Jews, a Jew, that he may gain the Jews," and "makes himself the servant of all, that he may gain the more," etc. He is full of the tenderest love for his weak converts,[1] knows how to encourage them either by praise or by reproach, brings down to the level of their intelligence the deepest mysteries which have been revealed to him, and for their sake does not fear to grapple with the most difficult problems of the day. His disinterestedness in pursuing the work of the ministry is probably greater than that of any apostolic teacher of the time, and his ambition to win hearts to the loving service of Christ is coextensive with the ends of the world. He is not satisfied with founding and organizing churches, but he watches over their spiritual interests even when a prisoner far away from them, and knows how to urge them to carry out not only the precepts, but also the counsels of the New Law. In a word, St. Paul was indeed "to Christ a vessel of election to carry His name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the children of Israel."[2]

Other holy examples could easily be pointed out in connection with Mary, the Mother of the Lord; Peter, the visible Head of the whole Church; John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved;" Martha and Mary of Bethany; St. Paul's faithful disciples, Timothy and Luke and Titus; the early

[1] Galat. iv, 19. [2] Acts ix, 25.

Christians of Jerusalem, Antioch, Thessaloníca; etc.; and they too would supply us with excellent materials for meditation, and also for proofs that the devotional contents of the New Testament tend more directly and positively than those of the Old Covenant, to promote a close union of our minds and of our hearts with the Almighty.

Finally, although the New Testament records a much smaller number of sacred hymns and set forms of prayer than the inspired writings composed before Our Lord's coming, it is clear that its canticles,—especially those of Mary (the *Magnificat*)[1] and of Simeon (the *Nunc Dimittis*),[2]—as also its formulas of prayer,—very particularly the Lord's prayer,[3] Christ's prayer in the Garden of Olives[4] and on the Cross,[5]—are likewise of a higher order than those that are contained in the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

The superiority we have thus far described in regard to the general object and the chief devotional contents of the New Testament over those of the Old, naturally accounts for the greater influence, which the sacred writings of the New Law have exercised upon the personal piety of Christian generations. Men and women in all the walks of life have learned from it to look upon God as a Father, who positively requires

[1] Luke i, 46–55. [2] Luke ii, 29–32.
[3] Matt. vi, 9–13; Luke xi, 2–4.
[4] Mark xiv, 36 sqq. [5] Luke xxiii, 34.

and infinitely deserves the love and perfect service of His children. Under the influence of Christ's words and examples, and also in close union with Him, they have earnestly striven "to seek the things that are above where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, to mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth."[1] Devout meditations on the Passion and Death of the Son of God have aroused in their hearts feelings of fervent and generous love, repeating with St. Paul: "the charity of Christ presseth us . . . . Christ died for all; that they also who live, may not now live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again."[2] Serious reflections on Our Lord's exalted teachings, wonderful miracles, striking parables, etc., have been a constant source of feelings of confidence, faith, humility, sorrow for sin, charity, watchfulness, etc., in countless souls. Yea more, single sentences of the New Testament have aroused from the torpor of sin numerous souls, that of Augustine, the future great doctor of the Church, for example; have induced such men as St. Antony, St. Francis of Assisi, and a host of others, to give up worldly advantages to take up the cross of Christ and follow after Him; and have caused men and women to see in the poor, and the weak, and the sick, and the lepers, and the fallen, etc., so many members of Christ,

[1] Colossians iii, 1, 2. [2] II Cor. v, 14, 15.

and kept them at the great works of mercy they had undertaken for His sake. In fine, century after century, in the world as well as in the cloister, among the rich and among the poor, the sublime teachings of the New Testament have reached the minds and the hearts of men, and powerfully contributed to inspire them with the hatred of sin, the forgiveness of injuries, the hope of a life everlasting with Christ, the love of God and the neighbor, the detachment from the world, a child-like surrender to divine guidance, and a perfect service of their heavenly Father.

This wide-spread and enduring influence of the sacred books of the New Covenant has been, to a great extent, the result of their direct perusal by the people at large. To a greater extent, however, it is the outcome of the constant use which the Church of God has made of their most instructive and touching portions, in her sacred Liturgy. From the earliest times of Christianity, sections from the Gospels and from St. Paul's writings were read in the public services, together with selections from the inspired writings of the Old Testament, and were commented upon by bishops and priests for the edification of the faithful. Sunday after Sunday, year after year, these passages were not only explained, but applied to the various spiritual needs of the flock of Christ, by a direct appeal to the words themselves which had been read, and also by quotations from other portions of the New Testa-

ment calculated to illustrate and enforce the same truths. In this way, even the sacred words of Christ or of His apostles which had not been appointed for public reading on any day of the liturgical year, became familiar to the minds of the Christian people, and made to tell on their moral and spiritual life. The increase in faith and devotion which thus resulted from the public use of certain parts of the New Testament in the Christian Church, could not help being realized by the pastors of the flock of Christ, and it led them naturally to add gradually new selections from these or other sacred writings of the New Testament, with the well-founded hope that these also would contribute to the advancement of God's kingdom in the hearts of the people.

Together with these most useful public readings from the New Testament, Holy Mother Church has always placed on the lips of her ministers and of her children, beautiful prayers, the gist, or even the wording, of which, can usually be traced back to some pious thoughts or feelings contained in the Scriptural selections for the Mass of the Sunday or of the festival. In this way too, did she suggest to all, pious petitions for forgiveness, spiritual help, greater faith, more constant generosity, etc.; in this way also, did the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament contribute to promote a closer and closer union of men's minds and hearts with God.

As might naturally be expected, both these selections from the Gospels and the Epistles, and the liturgical prayers more or less directly derived therefrom, are embodied in our ordinary prayer-books or manuals of devotion, and this gives a further opportunity to the faithful to become thoroughly conversant with them, and reflect on them at leisure, so as to draw greater spiritual profit from them. Besides, our ordinary books of piety contain numerous quotations from almost all the parts of the New Testament, together with hymns and prayers which are little more than a devout expansion of the words of these sacred writings. Many a time too, they furnish pious souls with reflections or set forms of meditation on Our Lord's life and teachings, calculated to increase in them the childlike spirit of the Gospel.

By these, and other such means, the general object and chief devotional contents of the sacred books written after Our Lord's coming, have been kept steadily before the minds and hearts of Christian generations, and have gradually raised the tone of thought and feeling of Christendom, so that, at the present day, they are a test of the religious character of man and of society. The outward practice of religion counts for little, even in the eyes of worldlings, unless it is felt to be animated by that living faith and that genuine love for God and for the neighbor, which are inculcated in every page of the New Testament. Only in so far as men earnestly

endeavor to live up to the high ideals of Evangelical morality, Christlike piety, loving submission to God, unselfish devotion to the poor, the weak and the sick, sincere forgiveness of injuries, unswerving fidelity to duty, generous detachment from things of earth, etc., which are set forth in the words and examples of Christ, can they be regarded as truly religious; and it is plain that the more constantly they carry out in their daily life the exalted teachings of the New Testament, the nobler also their religious character stands before men and before God. So is it likewise with men considered collectively; for the sacred writings of the New Testament, distinctly inculcate principles of justice and charity and equity, which every society must take into account in its internal and external relations, in order that its character for uprightness and godliness be maintained and developed. Whence, it is rightly felt by the world at large, that any nation which has embodied these great principles in its constitution, and sincerely means to live up to them, has well understood the noble end which a godly community should pursue here below, and that every deviation from this holy purpose, may indeed liken it to other world-powers, but only because its moral and religious character has thus been brought down to their lower level.

The general drift of the present Lecture has been to point out what may be called the main purpose

of the Holy Scriptures of both Testaments. They were not given to men by the Almighty, with a view to forward directly worldly or temporal interests, but to promote true holiness. Even in the sacred writings of the Old Testament, this main purpose of a thrice-holy God, may easily be discovered; while in those of the New, it is manifest on every page. Under the guidance of the divine Spirit, God's holy servants have delighted in perusing them, so as to derive from them an increase of faith and inward devotion. They went to the written word of God, especially to the New Testament, as to an inexhaustible source of light and love; and as "the children of the saints,"[1] we should, after their example, go to it, with the same lofty view of its purpose and devotional contents, with the same earnest desire to draw nearer and closer to God by its means.

O how I love Thy Law!
It is ever my meditation.
Thy commandment maketh me wiser than my enemies;
For it is ever before me.

. . . . . .

How sweet are Thy words to my palate!
Sweeter than honey to my mouth!
From Thy precepts I learn wisdom;
Hence I hate every false way.
Thy word is a lamp to my feet,
And a light to my path (Ps. cxviii, 97, 98, 103–105).

[1] Tobias ii, 18.

Happy the man who walketh not in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor treadeth the path of sinners,
Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers.
But whose delight is in the Law of the LORD,
And on that Law meditateth day and night.
He is like a tree planted by streams of water,
Which bringeth forth its fruit in due season,
Whose leaves also do not wither:
All that he doeth shall prosper (Ps. i, 1–3).

LECTURE VIII.

THE BIBLE AND THE MIRACULOUS.

"Sacred History is distinguished from Profane by the nature of the facts which enter into its composition . . . . . Miracles are its characteristic."—(*J. H. Newman*).

SYNOPSIS OF LECTURE VIII.

The Bible and the Miraculous.

I. Preliminary Remarks,

1. Biblical Conception of the Miraculous.
2. The Power of Working Miracles always taken for granted by the Sacred Writers.

II. The Miracles in the Old Testament.

1. Their Principal Classes and General Purpose:
   - The World of Nature.
   - Man (Cures;—Resurrections;—Knowledge of Thoughts).
   - Future Events; Prophecies.
   - Spirit-World.
2. Principal Objections Stated and Examined.
   - General Ignorance of the Laws of Nature.
   - Native Credulity of Ancient Peoples.
   - Legendary Additions in the Course of Ages.
3. Comparison with the Miraculous in the Sacred Books of Ancient Religions.

III. The Miracles in the New Testament.

1. Miracles Naturally to be expected in the Second Part of the Bible.
2. The Miraculous in the Life and Work of Christ.
3. The Miraculous in the Primitive Church.
4. Brief General Answers to Difficulties concerning the Gospel Miracles.

Concluding Remarks.

LECTURE VIII.

The Bible and the Miraculous.

> "Sacred History is distinguished from Profane by the nature of the facts which enter into its composition. . . . . Miracles are its characteristic."—(*J. H. Newman*).

Every attentive reader of the Old and the New Testaments will readily vouch for the correctness of the contrast thus briefly set forth by the great English Cardinal, between our inspired records and ordinary books of history. Events out of the known track of Divine agency are not only detailed in the Holy Bible, but are so interwoven with its very texture and substance, that the old Biblical history is grounded upon them and presupposes them. They clearly form one of the leading features of Holy Writ, and indeed one, which, after having been long and confidently appealed to as the best aid to faith in a divine Revelation, is very often nowadays regarded as a hindrance to belief in the supernatural, or even simply historical, character of our sacred books. In fact, few topics connected with the Bible have given rise throughout the nineteenth century, to sharper contests between the defenders of Revelation and its opponents, than the

question of the miraculous occurrences of which we read in the Holy Scriptures of both Testaments. It is only right therefore, that in one of the present Lectures, we should deal with this important aspect of the Bible.

I. Although miracles play so great a part in the sacred narrative, yet we nowhere find in it, a formal and explicit definition of their exact nature. In this respect, as in many others, the Bible is essentially an oriental book, that is one to which our scientfic methods with their abstract definitions, sharp divisions, etc., are altogether foreign. It usually furnishes us with a concrete, and at times, very short, description of a miraculous occurrence, and lets us draw our own inference as to its supernatural character. Oftentimes, however, it speaks of certain facts as "prodigies,"[1] "mighty deeds,"[2] and "signs,"[3] thus applying to them names which, on the basis of the Biblical conception of the universe, imply a direct and special intervention of God in the affairs of men.

According to the sacred writers of both Testaments, the Almighty is always at work and manifests His supreme power in the maintenance of the order of the universe; and in fact, His hand is as necessary in each moment of the world's existence for each operation of created things, as it was for

[1] Cfr. for instance, Exodus iv, 21; Acts vi, 8; etc.; etc.
[2] Deuter. iii, 24; Acts ii, 22; Mark vi, 2; etc.
[3] Exod. vii, 3; Acts xiv, 3; etc.

creation at the first. They conceive of the world, not as a huge machine, which once produced and set in motion, is kept in running order by the working of forces more or less independent of its maker's will; but rather as an immense collection of creatures no less dependent for their divers operations and their very existence on God's power and will, than the words of a man are on his will and energy.[1] The regular order of nature is simply the outcome of God's power and wisdom which usually manifest themselves according to those definite and constant modes of operation which are called natural laws. So that the all-mighty and all-wise Creator of the universe is distinctly conceived as in no way bound by such natural laws, as altogether free, on due occasions and for wise purposes, to make Himself signally and supernaturally manifest in the affairs of men. This He actually does, when in addition to His ordinary way of working in nature, He produces sensible effects which transcend the operation of natural causes. Such events being strikingly out of the usual ways of Divine government, appear very wonderful to men who observe them: hence their name of "prodigies" or "wonders." Their witnesses being able no longer to say: "This is Nature's work," forgetting all the while that Nature is the continuous work of God, contemplate in them God's "mighty deeds or

[1] Cfr. Isai. xxvi, 12; John v, 17; Matt. x, 29, 30; Acts xiv, 16; xvii, 25, 28; etc.

powers," and are compelled to confess: "The finger of God is here."[1] Finally, when these wonderful works are performed in favor of the supernatural character of a message, they are "signs" of Heaven's approval, positive credentials of a divine mission.[2]

Thus then, it always appeared evident to the inspired writers, that the living God, who continuously works in nature, can, at any time, intervene in a special manner in the world; and in consequence, we never find them concerned about proving the possibility of the miraculous. They naturally take the power of working miracles for granted, all the more so because those for whom they wrote,—as indeed all the nations of antiquity,—never questioned it. Besides, as regards the sacred narrators of the Old Testament, their deep conviction that they belonged to the chosen people of God, that is to a nation having the Almighty as the head of the State, the supreme judge of His subjects, and the commander of the hosts of Israel, made them naturally admit the fact of a direct and special divine intervention in the selection of the race of Abraham, together with the firm hope of miraculous interposition whenever necessary for its moral and spiritual guidance. Such were also the feelings of the New Testament writers, conscious as

[1] Exodus viii, 19.

[2] Cfr. Exod. iv, 2–9; John iii, 2; xv, 24; Acts ii, 22; etc.

they were of belonging to the new "Israel of God,"[1] that is to the "nation" which had inherited the Kingdom of God,[2] and in behalf of which numerous miracles were daily performed.

In the light of these preliminary remarks, it is now comparatively easy to deal briefly with the miraculous element as it is found, first in the Old, and next in the New, Testament.

II. The first sphere of the miracles recorded in the sacred writings of the Old Covenant, is the World of Nature, the most powerful elements of which are repeatedly set forth as feeling the effects of God's omnipotence. At His command, the waters of the Red Sea were divided, and allowed safe passage to the children of Israel, whereas at His command too, they returned and drowned the Egyptian army.[3] A similar miracle is recorded in behalf of the Hebrews when they crossed the Jordan to invade Chanaan; and this wonderful occurrence, while greatly encouraging to the people of God, struck with terror the Chanaanites and deprived them of their lingering hope that the swollen waters of the river would detain the invaders some time longer on its eastern banks.[4] Wonders of a somewhat different kind, but no less calculated to impress the minds of all with the supreme power of the true God, are also

[1] Galatians vi, 16.
[2] Matt. xxi, 43; I Petr. ii, 9 sqq.; etc.
[3] Exodus xiv, 13–31; Ps. lxxvi, 17 sqq.; etc.
[4] Cfr. Josue iii; v, 1.

described in connection with the same mighty element of nature, as when the waters of the river Nile, were changed into blood,[1] those of the Wilderness deprived of their great bitterness,[2] and more particularly when a spring of water issued for Israel from the rock of Horeb.[3] Another powerful element of nature, fire, is likewise repeatedly mentioned as subservient to God's omnipotent intervention in the world. Thus we read of Jehovah making use of it to ratify sacrifices,[4] to punish rebels to His authority,[5] and also,—a fact which must have appeared a clearer proof still of His infinite power,—preventing flames from hurting in any way the three children who had been cast into the fiery furnace of Babylon.[6] Again, celestial bodies, and in particular, the sun and the moon, the two great deities of Chanaan, are described as obeying Jehovah, as standing still in the midst of the heavens and thus contributing to the more complete defeat of their own worshippers.[7] Finally, heaven and earth, are likewise represented as the subjects of God's supernatural interposition as "when heaven was shut up three years and six months" in the time of Elias,[8] and when the earth

[1] Exod. vii, 17–21. [2] Exod. xv, 23–25.

[3] Exod. xvii, 1–7.

[4] Leviticus ix, 24; III Kings xviii, 38.

[5] Numb. xvi, 35; etc. [6] Daniel iii, 23 sqq.

[7] Josue x, 12–14. In reference to this miracle, see *Outlines of Jewish History*," p. 139.

[8] Luke iv, 25; III Kings xvii, 1; xviii 1, 41. Cfr. I Kings xii, 16 sqq.

"opening her mouth swallowed down those. . . . who had blasphemed Jehovah."[1]

The more one studies these and other such miracles recorded in the Old Testament in connection with the world of nature, the more also will he find that, as a class, they demand our attention especially "as resulting from known attributes of God, and corresponding to the ordinary arrangements of His providence. Even as detached events they might excite a rational awe toward the mysterious Author of nature. But they are presented to us, not as unconnected and unmeaning occurrences, but as holding a place in an extensive plan of Divine government, completing the moral system, connecting Man and his Maker, and introducing him to the means of securing his happiness in another and eternal state of being. . . . . Their express purpose is to confirm the natural evidence of one God, the Creator of all things, to display His attributes and will with distinctness and authority, and to enforce the obligation of religious observances, and the sinfulness of idolatrous worship."[2]

This high and religious purpose of the miracles upon the world of nature, which makes them appear truly worthy of the Almighty to whom they are ascribed, can also be easily recognized in

[1] Numbers xvi, 30 sqq.

[2] J. H. Newman, *First Essay on Miracles*, Section ii, pp. 23 (Longmans & Co., 1890).

connection with the Old Testament miracles which have man for their object. This is distinctly the case with the infliction of death upon the first-born of the Egyptians, which is recorded in Exodus as the last miraculous means resorted to by Moses to prove Jehovah's superiority over the gods of Egypt,[1] and to show "how wonderful a difference Jehovah maketh between the Egyptians and Israel."[2] So is it likewise with the cure of Naaman's leprosy by Eliséus, which led this Syrian general to declare openly: "In truth, I know there is no other God in all the earth, but only in Israel."[3] And a similar moral and religious purpose could readily be pointed out in reference to the other miracles of healing which are recounted in the Scriptures of the Old Covenant.[4]

It is true that the raising of the dead to life,—three instances of which are mentioned in the Old Testament,[5]—is not explicitly connected by the narrators with any such religious purpose. But this connection is clearly implied first, in the very nature of the occurrence which has always been conceived as the distinct work of almighty power; and secondly, in the fact that these resurrections are described as forming part of the glorious deeds

[1] Exod. x, 2; Numb. xxxiii, 4; Wisdom xii, 27.

[2] Exod. xi, 7. [3] IV Kings v, 15. See also verse 7.

[4] Cfr. Gen. xx, 6 sqq.; Numb. xii; xxi, 5 sqq.; II Machabees iii, 24–39; etc.; etc.

[5] III Kings xvii, 18 sqq.; IV Kings iv, 32 sqq.; xiii, 21.

of the prophets Elias and Eliseus, the two great champions of pure worship and morality in Israel.

We need not have recourse to such suppositions or explanations in reference to the supernatural knowledge of men's thoughts and private deeds, which is so often ascribed to these and other prophets of old. Time and again, the exact purpose of miracles of that description is explicitly stated in the sacred writings of the Old Testament, and whenever stated, exhibits these miracles as contributing powerfully to preserve in Israel a right conception of the supreme power and infinite holiness of the "Searcher of the hearts and reins" of men.[1] Nathan's supernatural knowledge of David's fall into the heinous sins of adultery and murder, enabled that prophet to bring home to the monarch the sense of his guilt against Jehovah who "had anointed him King over Israel," and to foretell how his contempt of the divine law would be visited with a public punishment.[2] The purpose of vindicating God's holy law and supreme authority is assigned to the distinct revelation made to Elias that Achab had secured Naboth's vineyard by the murder of its lawful owner,[3] while the supernatural knowledge imparted to the same prophet that Ochozias had sent messengers to consult Beelzebub, the god of Accaron, concerning his illness, served to illustrate and emphasize the great truth that there was indeed "a God in

[1] Ps. vii, 10.
[2] II Kings xii, 1, 7, 10, 12.
[3] III Kings xxi, 17 sqq.

Israel, of whom the King might have inquired the word."[1] In point of fact, the special religious purpose of all such manifestations of men's thoughts and secrets, was gradually so well realized by the chosen people that they became in their eyes an evident proof of God's perfect knowledge of all things,[2] as also a distinctive sign of His true prophets.[3]

These remarks apply very pertinently to another feature of the prophetical office in Israel. God's special messengers to His people uttered oracles respecting the future of the Jewish race and of the heathen nations, and also respecting the coming Redeemer of both Jews and Gentiles, and their various predictions had but one object in view, viz.: the furtherance of the religious interests of mankind. As well stated by the eminent Catholic professor Jahn,[4] they were not uttered "to support the tottering interests of States or Kings, to satisfy mere curiosity about the future, or to incline the people to the wishes of their rulers. They all tended to one object, worthy of a Divine intervention, the proof of the Divine mission of the prophets, and by consequence, of the true doctrine concerning God, namely that the only one God who sent the prophets is the omniscient Ruler of the universe;[5] and particularly that He was governing the Hebrews in

[1] IV Kings i, 2, 6, 16. [2] Daniel ii, 28, 47.
[3] Luke vii, 39; John iv, 19.
[4] Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 297 (English Transl.)
[5] Isai. xli, 21 sq.

such a manner that they should preserve the knowledge of Him until the period when it shall be propagated to all nations by a great Messenger who was to arise from the posterity of David." It may also be noticed that the predictions of the prophets are usually bound up with further instructions, warnings, etc., which had a religious or moral bearing for their direct object.[1]

A last class of miraculous interventions to be mentioned, bespeaks the same general purpose. It includes the wonderful facts connected with the Spirit-World, such as heavenly visions, apparitions of angels, etc. Many of these occurrences consist in apparitions of the Angel of the Lord granted to the chosen people to firmly convince them of Jehovah's constant care in their behalf,[2] or to the prophets of old to enable them to discharge with accurate knowledge and unflinching courage, their difficult task of preserving in Israel, the pure belief and worship of God.[3] Others are visions from the Lord Himself vouchsafed to Abraham, Isaac, and the other patriarchs of the Hebrew nation; to such great religious leaders as Moses, Josue, Samuel and the prophets in general; to private individuals or even to heathens;[4] but, as may be easily seen in every

[1] For details concerning the Prophetical Office in the Old Testament, see *Outlines of Jewish History* (chaps. xxiii, xxiv), by the present writer.

[2] Cfr. Exodus xxiii, 20 sqq.; etc., etc.

[3] Cfr. III Kings xix, 5 sqq.; etc. [4] Cfr. Genesis xx, 3 sqq.

case, always for a distinctly moral or religious purpose. Finally, the same thing may also be observed in connection with the wonderful apparitions of heavenly messengers sent to punish sacrilegious invaders of the Temple of the Lord,[1] or to help the Machabees in their heroic fight against the deadly enemies of their God and of their country.[2]

It is plain, therefore, that on whatever objects wrought,—be they the world of nature, man's body and soul, future events, or the spirit-world,—the miracles recorded in the Old Testament, when taken as a whole, are truly worthy of God's almighty power and infinite goodness, so that their antecedent probability must be granted by all. It will always stand to reason that the all-wise and powerful Creator and Ruler of the universe, may for such a wise purpose as the moral and religious welfare of man, the King of creation, directly intervene in the course of the world, and produce sensible effects which transcend the operation of natural causes. In fact, at the present day, this antecedent probability of God's miraculous interposition is hardly ever denied by those who truly admit the existence of a personal God, and the main difficulties against the miracles recorded in the Old Testament are usually drawn from other considerations.

One of these difficulties may be briefly stated as follows. The miracles of the Old Testament, we are told, are the product of an age unacquainted

[1] II Machabees iii, 24 sqq. [2] II Machab. x, 29 sqq.

with the laws of nature. Owing to this ignorance, natural facts, when unusual and striking, were at once construed by the ancients into supernatural occurrences, whereas a knowledge of nature's laws and forces, would have clearly shown that they were but natural events. It is in this way, for instance, it is said, that the peoples of antiquity, the Hebrews included, looked upon thunder as the direct voice of the Deity.[1] And there is no doubt, it is claimed, that if the telephone, the wireless telegraph, the X-rays, etc., had been suddenly made known to them, these wonderful inventions would have been regarded as phenomena due to supernatural agency; all the more so, because in their eyes, the laws and forces of nature, were hardly distinct from the direct working of the almighty Ruler and Preserver of the universe. Plainly then, it is concluded, their ignorance of the laws of nature rendered the Jews of old, and by consequence also the Hebrew writers of the Old Testament, incapable of defining what is purely natural and what must be considered as truly miraculous.

We must readily grant that this first difficulty may be, and in fact, has been enlarged upon by men of considerable attainments, and thus made to appear very strong against the supernatural character of those occurrences which the Old Testament writers call "signs," "prodigies," or "mighty deeds." But it is in reality very weak against

[1] Cfr. Ps. xvii, 14; xxviii, 3; etc.

the miraculous in the Old Testament. First of all, it is of no force whatever against all those miraculous facts,—such as the three resurrections of the dead mentioned above, the smiting at night of all the first-born of the Egyptians while those of the Hebrews were spared, etc.,[1]—the supernatural character of which cannot manifestly be explained away by any amount of acquaintance with the secret workings of nature. It is likewise of no force against the many miraculous events, which however natural they might appear in themselves, must nevertheless be regarded as supernatural, because several things connected with their production prove their miraculous character. Thus for instance, the first of the Plagues of Egypt, the turning of the water of the Nile into blood. Owing to its close analogy with the annual phenomenon of the "Red Nile," whereby this river appears in the eyes of all as a river of blood, many unbelievers would have us regard it as being simply the wonderful, though natural change of color in the water of the Nile, at the regular time of its overflow. But many things in the sacred record forbid us doing so. The ordinary redness at the time of the Nile's overflow does not render the water unfit for use or injurious to the fish in the river, while the reverse is positively affirmed by the Bible in connection with the first plague.[2] Again, it should be noticed that the effect of the

[1] Exodus xii. [2] Cfr. Exodus vii, 20, 21.

stretching of Aaron's rod was immediate, that it had been predicted, that it extended at once to all the canals, trenches and pools connected with the Nile, and even to the water which had previously been taken from the river,[1] which circumstances, of course, are not realized in connection with the annual phenomenon of the Red Nile. It is plain therefore that several features of the first plague distinguish it from the natural phenomenon of the Red Nile and mark it as a miraculous event; and a similar conclusion would be forced upon us, were we to compare the eight following plagues with the corresponding natural scourges which occur from time to time, in the valley of the Nile. The plentiful supply of quails, of which we read in the book of Exodus, might, considered in itself, easily be taken as a mere natural event, since various details recorded in connection with it, agree very well with what travellers tell us of the usual migration of quails from Africa. Yet, it was an actual miracle, inasmuch as the exact time of the sending of the quails had been most distinctly foretold by Moses.[2] Countless examples of a similar kind could be easily pointed out,[3] all going to prove that, as a matter of fact, the Hebrews of old were not only capable of distinguishing supernatural,

[1] Exod. vii, 19 sqq. [2] Exodus xvi, 8.

[3] Most of them are pointed out and briefly examined in *Outlines of Jewish History*, by the present writer. See also Vigouroux, *Bible et Découvertes modernes;* C. Geikie, *Hours with the Bible;* etc.

from mere natural, occurrences, but correctly did so in numberless instances.

Nor is this conclusion in any way invalidated by the general statement embodied in the objection, to the effect that the peoples of antiquity, the Hebrews included, looked wrongly upon thunder as a supernatural occurrence, as the very voice of the Almighty. For however true this statement may be in connection with the other nations besides Israel, it is incorrect as far as the Old Testament writers are concerned. Thunder is described as God's voice only in poetical passages of the inspired records of the Old Covenant; while elsewhere,—that is in the passages which convey strictly the Hebrew mind regarding this natural phenomenon,—it is invariably spoken of, in the same manner as we usually speak of it ourselves in the present day.[1]

As regards such wonderful discoveries of our age, as the telephone, the wireless telegraph, etc., referred to in the objection we are examining, as of a nature to mislead the ancient Hebrews concerning their real character, we admit frankly that they would have appeared to them truly wonderful and inexplicable, and perhaps miraculous, if produced before them unexpectedly. But we must no less frankly state that we do not see the exact connection, which such wonders in the field of modern science, may have with the Old Testament miracles. As was

[1] See Exodus ix, 23; xix, 16; Esther xi, 5; Ecclesiasticus xl, 13; xliii, 18.

shown above, many of these,—the resurrections of the dead, for instance,—manifestly transcend in themselves the working of nature's laws and forces; while others, still more numerous, must be acknowledged as truly supernatural, not indeed in themselves, but in the decidedly miraculous circumstances which surrounded their production. Furthermore, it should be borne in mind, as well stated by Card. Newman,[1] "that though the miraculous character of some of them (that is, of the Biblical miracles) is more doubtful in one age than in another, yet the progress of Science has made no approximation to a general explication of them on natural principles. While discoveries in Optics and Chemistry have accounted for a host of apparent miracles, they hardly touch upon those of the Jewish and Christian systems. Here is no phantasmagoria to be detected, no analysis or synthesis of substances, ignitions, explosions, and other customary resources of the juggler's art." Finally, it may be safely affirmed, that our increased knowledge of the laws of matter, of the limited quantity of motion existing in the universe, of the gradual development of beings on our globe, etc., instead of shutting off God's positive intervention from the world at a given moment of its existence, requires it more and more imperatively, so that, contrary to what was asserted in the first objection we had to examine, progress in Science tends to confirm, rather than to destroy, the old Hebrew con-

[1] *First Essay on Miracles*, p. 55 (Longmans, 1890).

ception of the universe as produced and governed by an intelligent and free Agent, who can and does positively intervene in the world for purposes worthy of His wisdom and goodness.

We have discussed somewhat at length this first objection, chiefly because it is the one most constantly and most confidently brought forth against the miraculous in the Old Testament. But however strong it may appear in the eyes of those who reject the Old Testament miracles, it is really very weak, when closely examined; and the same thing must be said in reference to a second objection which they urge with hardly less confidence, in favor of their position. According to them, the Hebrews of old clearly shared the native credulity of all the ancient peoples as regards the marvelous, for they believed, we are told, in talking animals, as we see in the case of the serpent which tempted Eve, of Balaam's ass, etc. They belonged, it is said, to the childhood of the human race, when the power of criticism had not yet been developed by mental training and diffusion of general knowledge, and in consequence, they gave all the more easily credence to marvelous traditions and narratives, because more replete with wonderful incidents.

It will be readily noticed that this second objection assumes, like the first, a perfect identity between the condition of the chosen people of God and that of the other ancient nations. Nor can it be gainsaid that in regard to many things,—in regard to art,

sciences, etc.,—they were at least as backward as the nations by which they were surrounded. Nor can it even be well denied that in respect of native credulity, they resembled very much the other peoples of antiquity. Despite this close resemblance, however, between the Hebrews and the ancient nations of the world, there are important differences concerning their respective relations to the moral Ruler of the universe, which should always be borne in mind when speaking of the miraculous in the Old Testament. As the Israelites were God's chosen people, distinctly set apart to preserve His knowledge and worship in the world, it is antecedently probable that the Almighty would intervene in their government whenever necessary for the fulfilment of His purposes in their regard, punishing, warning or helping them in such a way that they would distinctly realize His divine interposition, together with their bounden duty of constant fidelity to His service. We must therefore look upon the Hebrews of old as the special object of God's positive care, as truly capable of noticing and interpreting the "signs," "prodigies" and "mighty deeds" performed in their behalf, and as no less capable of transmitting the remembrance of such miracles from generation to generation. Now this special condition of the Israelites plainly excludes the play of their native credulity as the sole cause of their looking for or believing in the wonderful narratives contained in the Old Testament. Besides,

the only two occurrences of talking animals that can be pointed out in those inspired records, supply manifestly an insufficient basis for such a wide inference that, as a nation, the Hebrews were always ready to give credence to marvelous legends, however absurd. But, more especially, is this ungrounded inference contrary to actual fact, as far as the sacred writers of the Old Covenant are concerned. They indeed sometimes embody in their work, parables[1] or even fables,[2] but when they do so, it is in a manner which proves that they are fully aware of their non-historical character. At other times, they mention the fact that certain miraculous events have been tested and ascertained by contemporaries, as signs of divine intervention;[3] while at other times again, they simply give the traditional account of wonderful occurrences without expressing any view of their own concerning their real nature. These, and other such methods of composition, which may be easily noticed by the attentive reader of the Old Testament, prove conclusively that the inspired narrators are not so entirely deprived of the power of criticism as the objection we are examining would have us believe, and that the native credulity of the ancient Hebrews must not be magnified to such an extent as to do away with all the miracles described in their sacred books.

[1] Cfr. II Kings xii, 1–6; Ezechiel xv; etc.
[2] Judges ix, 7–15; IV Kings xiv, 9.
[3] Exodus viii, 19; IV Kings viii, 1, 4–6; etc.

There is, however, in the composition of the Old Testament, a feature often appealed to as accounting for the miraculous character of its contents. The authors of the sacred writings composed before Christ, we are reminded, were hardly ever contemporary with the facts which they record, but depended almost exclusively for information on oral traditions transmitted from father to son for centuries, or at best on documents most of which had been written many years, and perhaps centuries, after the events described therein. Owing to this long interval between the occurrence of an event and the time of the Hebrew writer of the Old Covenant, the primitive fact had, we are told, plenty of chances for being not simply imperfectly handed down, but even gradually transformed into a wonderful transaction. The mighty deeds of a very strong man like Samson, for instance, it is said, were from the very beginning, a fit material for legendary reports of his encounters with the Philistines. In process of time, more marvelous details were embodied in popular traditions, with the final result that Samson's natural feats of strength assumed that superhuman character with which they appear invested in the book of Judges. So was it also, it is claimed, with Moses' fight against Pharao's unwillingness to let Israel depart from Egypt. Scourges natural to that country were gradually transformed into a divine punishment of Pharao's obduracy, and "strange things," as we are told, "grew in memory to mirac-

ulous things."[1] In like manner, it is supposed, Elias having taken to flight and hid himself in the deep ravine which the brook Cherith has worn in the rocky hills, "lived there, no one knew how; and the story arose that the ravens, or crows, brought him bread and meat."[2] Thus in a shorter or longer time, it is concluded, purely natural events were transformed into supernatural, and to be understood aright in the present day, must be divested of their legendary and superhuman character.

In answer to this third objection against the miraculous in the Old Testament, we shall not attempt to point out how in almost every single case the sacred text must needs be distorted to make it refer to mere natural transactions. This would be an endless task, and moreover one unnecessary to dispose of the present objection. Suffice it to say that such a naturalistic explaining away of the Old Testament miracles: 1) assumes quietly, but none the less unscientifically, that all facts occurring in this world must of a necessity be simply natural events; 2) does not in any way account for the production of such miracles as resurrections, healings of leprosy, etc., the supernatural character of which does not depend on legendary additions to the primitive report of a natural fact; 3) evidently exaggerates the defects inherent to oral transmission of ancient events, and unduly extends to all the mira-

[1] *Early Old Testament Narratives*, by W. H. Lyon, Lesson xv.
[2] W. H. Lyon, *ibid.*, Lesson xxxiii.

cles recorded in the Old Testament the effect of legendary additions which may perhaps be discovered in the case of a very few among them ;[1] 4) and finally, does not give any plausible account of those miracles which are recorded by men who, like the writer of the second book of the Machabees, were practically contemporary with the events which they detail.

Such are the principal theories advanced of late, to bring down to the low level of mere natural occurrences, all the miracles described in the Old Testament. They have signally failed in their attempt to disprove the supernatural character of events, which when closely examined either in themselves or in their circumstances, will always appear to the unbiased student of Holy Writ, clearly to point back to a personal God whose distinct purpose it was to preserve His revelation among the people of His choice. In truth, miracles such as those we find recorded in the Old Testament, are not only antecedently probable for the furtherance of the divine purpose, but are, moreover, the sole possible explanation for the historical fact that the knowledge and worship of the true God were preserved in only one nation of antiquity, and indeed one which lived surrounded by, or in the midst of, idolatrous peoples, and whose natural bent was always toward a licentious idolatry.

[1] In regard to the wonderful deeds of Samson, see *Outlines of Jewish History*, p. 166 sq.

The supernatural character of the wonderful facts detailed in the Old Testament, comes out also very vividly from the comparison often instituted during the nineteenth century, between them and the miraculous in the sacred books of other Ancient Religions. Resemblances exist indeed between these two kinds of prodigious events, but they are few, and easily accounted for by the fact that their respective records were composed by Oriental writers and go back to about the same antiquity. The differences, on the contrary, are very numerous, and all to the advantage of the miraculous contained in our sacred books of the Old Covenant. As foremost among these differences we shall briefly mention the following.

The first concerns the way in which the sacred writers apprehend and represent the meaning and intent of the Old Testament miracles. "In the biblical narratives there is an almost complete lack of that disposition to exaggerate which belongs to nearly all the other literature of the supernatural. There is also, with a few exceptions . . . , a discretion, which is for the age and audience remarkable, about passing the limits fixed for miraculous events by the customary divine order in nature. The fidelity of the biblical writers, in adhering to conceptions of law and seemliness, and in bringing even the miracles under the spiritual order of a divine process of revealing God's justice and grace, is a marked characteristic. . . ."[1]

[1] George T. Ladd, *What is the Bible?* p. 175.

The second difference regards the immediate object for which each miracle was wrought. In the writings of the Old Testament, this object is never simply to strike the popular fancy or satisfy the curiosity of the onlookers, however high their personal rank; it is always on the contrary, even in cases of miracles apparently of mere power, the instruction doctrinal or moral of the present beholders or of future generations. Thus while the miracle ascribed to Zoroaster, of suffering melted brass to be poured upon his breast without injury to himself, is a meaningless wonder unworthy of an all-wise Author, the descent of fire from heaven upon Elias' sacrifice is altogether worthy of Him, because of its immediate design of exemplifying the greatness of God.

In the third place, the Old Testament miracles, considered as a whole, have a general religious purpose altogether foreign to the miraculous contained in the sacred books of the other ancient religions. As well stated by Cardinal Newman, "they hold a place in an extensive plan of Divine government, completing the moral system, connecting Man and his Maker, and introducing him to the means of securing his happiness in another and eternal state of being. . . . The express purpose of the Jewish miracles is to confirm the natural evidence of one God, the Creator of all things, to display his attributes and will with distinctness and authority, and to enforce the obligation of religious observances, and the sinfulness of idolatrous worship."[1] "The biblical miracles," says

[1] *First Essay on Miracles*, p. 22 sq.

another writer,[1] "have a moral significance and sustain relations of the greatest interest and value to the development of the kingdom of God. They are *for an end*, and that end is to make the divine holiness and grace known to all men in an effective way. . . . They are factors or elements in a process of revealing God as the Redeemer of mankind. . . ."

Lastly, differently from the marvelous incidents recorded in the sacred books of other ancient nations, the miraculous element of the Old Testament, is woven into the very texture of Israel's history, to such an extent that many, not only of the minor events, but even of the most momentous facts in the public life of the Israelites, would be unintelligible if severed from the miracles which prepared or accompanied them. From the beginning to the end of that sacred history, miracles are to be met with, shaping the destinies of the Hebrew nation, and enabling us to understand the present condition of the Jewish race, once the chosen people of God, but now cast away because of its unbelief in the Redeemer and Saviour of mankind.

II. When one has thus distinctly realized the fact that miracles were truly performed in behalf of the ancient people of God, he is naturally led to think that wonders equally supernatural were also wrought in favor of the new "Israel of God," and to look for a record of them in the New Testament or second part of the Bible. Indeed,

[1] George T. Ladd, *What is the Bible?* p. 162 sq.

even though the New dispensation instituted by Our Lord should have been but a continuation of the Old Testament theocracy in precisely the manner in which this was expected to occur by His Jewish contemporaries; yet, miracles should still be anticipated, for the simple reason that they had been foretold in connection with the times of the Messias.[1] But as was explained in one of the foregoing Lectures,[2] the New Law was not simply a continuation of the Old Covenant. It was also a fulfilment of "the Law and the Prophets," such as would entail the removal of features ceremonial and even political, which the Jews wrongly deemed destined to last forever; such also as would bring about a new and higher order of things, together with the disclosure of many truths, dogmatic and moral, hitherto unsuspected by the teachers and leaders of Israel, or little in harmony with their frame of mind and heart. In particular, Jesus had to prove His divinity, a truth apparently most opposed to the first and foremost article of the Hebrew faith. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord;"[3] while His apostles had to preach the doctrine and worship of a crucified Messias, that is of One who, having hanged upon the cross as a criminal accursed by God, was naturally "unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles, foolishness."[4] Plainly then, only stupendous

[1] Cfr. Luke vii, 20 sqq.; John vii, 31; Acts ii, 1-22; etc.
[2] Lecture VI. [3] Deuteronomy vi, 4. [4] I Corinthians i, 23.

miracles could justify the claim of Jesus to the Godhead, first in the eyes of His contemporaries, of whom He Himself said: "If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin;"[1] and next, in the eyes of generations to come, for the benefit of whom Christ's mighty deeds "are written, that they may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, they may have life in His name."[2] Plainly too, as the ancient prophets and other messengers of the Almighty had evidenced the supernatural character of their mission by real miracles, the record of which is preserved in the sacred writings composed before Our Lord, so in like manner, is it only natural to think that the divine character of the much more important mission of the Apostles, the true successors of the prophets of old in the preaching of the Kingdom of God,[3] had also to be evidenced by real miracles, by such miracles as those we find described in the book of the Acts and in the canonical Epistles of the New Testament.

The identity of nature between the New Testament miracles and those of the Old Testament, is also suggested by the identity of names. In both parts of the Bible, they are called "wonders," "powers," "signs," and thus described in both the Old and New Testaments, as striking facts, requiring the exercise of superhuman power for their

[1] John xv, 24. [2] John xx, 31. [3] John iv, 38.

production, and granted by Heaven as credentials of a divine mission.

The foregoing general remarks apply all the more particularly to the miracles which the Gospels record of Our Lord's public ministry, because like those detailed in the Holy Scriptures of the Old Covenant, they also fall readily under the four principal heads of supernatural occurrences connected with 1) the World of Nature; 2) Man; 3) Future Events; and 4) the Spirit-World.[1] The first sphere of Our Lord's miracles is the World of Nature, which in a variety of ways, felt the effect of His unlimited power. At His will a substance was changed into another, as at Cana of Galilee,[2] or was almost indefinitely increased as in the twofold multiplication of loaves.[3] At other times, the laws which govern the physical universe seemed deprived of all force in His presence, as when he walked freely upon the sea,[4] or stilled the storm.[5] This first kind of miracles had a great influence upon the minds and feelings of Our Lord's contemporaries. The witnesses of these wonderful deeds felt at once that they were in the presence of a truly divine power,[6] and this feeling led them to praise God, and to ask themselves whether Jesus was not indeed the expected Messias.[7]

[1] The following description of the chief classes of Our Lord's miracles, is taken from *Outlines of the Life of Our Lord*, by the present writer.

[2] John ii, 3 sqq. [3] Matt. xiv, 15 sqq.; John vi, 5 sqq.

[4] John vi, 22–25. [5] Mark iv, 36–40.

[6] Mark iv, 40; Luke v, 8, 9; etc. [7] John vi, 14; etc.

A second class of miracles comprises those which had man for their subject. Apparently every great form of bodily infirmity—blindness,[1] leprosy,[2] issue of blood,[3] deafness and dumbness,[4] etc.—was brought before our merciful Saviour, who was known never to deny a miracle of healing to the expressed or silent prayer either of the sufferers or of their friends.[5] In point of fact, He perceived the secret wish for relief no less distinctly than the most explicit and open appeal to his power of healing, for "He knew what was in man."[6] This knowledge of men's intimate thoughts, whether of His enemies,[7] or of His friends,[8] or of those with whom He came in contact, Jesus evinced in a thousand ways, and He ever used it to the best advantage either of the surrounding multitudes or of those who were made aware that their innermost feelings did not escape His all-seeing eye.[9] Finally, it is recorded that on three several occasions the lifeless remains of man felt the effect of His power over death, and these three great miracles were well calculated to convince all that He was indeed "the Resurrection and the Life."[10]

The third subject of Our Lord's miracles consists in the future events which He distinctly

[1] Luke xviii, 35 sqq.; John ix. [2] Luke v, 12 sqq.
[3] Matt. ix, 20 sqq. [4] Mark vii, 32 sqq.; etc.
[5] Matt. viii, 5 sqq.; xiv, 36; Mark ii, 3 sqq.; etc.
[6] John ii, 25; Cfr. xxi, 15. [7] Luke v, 21, 22; etc.
[8] Matt. xvi, 8; etc.
[9] Cfr. Luke vii, 39 sqq.; John iv, 17 sqq.; etc.
[10] Luke vii, 11 sqq.; viii, 51 sqq.; John xi.

foretold. He spoke with the confidence of one who is perfectly acquainted with the future respecting His own person,[1] His church,[2] His disciples,[3] His enemies, Jerusalem,[4] and other cities of His country, etc., and we all know with what absolute accuracy His predictions have been fulfilled.

A last class of miracles has reference to the Spirit-World, and in this connection Jesus exerting His miraculous power appeared as the Holy One of God who had come to destroy the empire of Satan.[5] Despite all the theories advanced to disprove the reality of demoniacal possessions, it must be admitted that a careful study of the Gospel narrative proves that in this respect, the Evangelists and Our Lord Himself shared and approved the belief of their contemporaries. For them, as for all those around them, demoniacal possessions were a form of disease distinguishable from all others, and expulsions of evil spirits were events of real and frequent occurrence.[6]

It should be noticed, however, that though admitting of being connected with the same four general classes of supernatural events as those detailed in the Old Testament, Our Lord's miracles present several distinguishing peculiarities. One of these consists in the perfect mastery over all

[1] Matt. xx, 19 sqq.; etc. [2] Matt. xvi, 18 sqq; xiii, 32; etc.
[3] Matt. xxvi, 31 sqq.; etc. [4] Luke xxi, 6 sqq.; etc.
[5] Mark i, 24; Luke x, 17 sq.
[6] Luke iv, 40 sqq.; viii, 27–36; etc.

things which they evince. The subject of Christ's miracles is coextensive with creation: all the elements of nature, all the diseases of the body, however inveterate, death itself and the powers of hell, are subject to his command; men's most intimate thoughts do not escape His notice, and the future has no obscurity for His mental vision. Unlike the prophets of old, He moves in this world as the supreme Master of all things. Unlike the prophets of old, and the holy servants of God through ages, He performs miracles in His own name, with the greatest ease, and as men are wont to do their simplest actions. He has only to will, to say the word, and the effects, however astonishing, yea "not heard of from the beginning of the world,"[1] come to pass; and as His is not simply a delegated power, He can impart it to whomsoever He wills, and thereby cause His numerous messengers to perform similar wonders in His name.[2]

Another marked characteristic of the miracles wrought by our Saviour, is their appropriateness as proofs of His divine mission and character. Not only they were actions making exceptions to all the laws of nature, they were also the very deeds which ancient prophecy[3] had led Our Lord's contemporaries to regard as the credentials of the future Messias. Performed in the full blaze of the mid-day sun, in public places, in the presence

[1] John ix, 32. [2] Matt. x, 8; Luke ix, 1; x, 1, 9 sqq.
[3] Isaias xlii, 1 sqq.

of immense crowds, they appealed powerfully to the imagination of the people at large, as well as to the reason of thoughtful observers.[1] No wonder, then, that Jesus repeatedly pointed to His miracles as clear signs of His divine mission and character,[2] and that unbiased men, whatever their rank in society, feeling that these were not the deeds of one leagued with Beelzebub, as the Jewish leaders affirmed, were led to recognize Him as a prophet, as the Son of David and the expected Messias. No wonder too, that He could "upbraid the cities wherein were done most of His miracles, for that they had not done penance,"[3] and openly declare on the eve of His Passion: "If I had not done among them (His enemies) the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated both Me and my Father."[4]

In another respect, Our Lord's miracles stand in striking contrast with most supernatural events recorded in the Old Testament: while the latter are chiefly works of wisdom and power, the former are principally deeds of merciful love and tender compassion. As has been beautifully said by a contemporary writer: "This power which Jesus wielded so royally, which He held back so mightily, so that no provocation, no danger, no treason, no

[1] John vi, 14; iii, 2.
[2] John v, 36; x, 37, 38; xiv, 12; Luke xi, 20.
[3] Matt. xi, 20. [4] John xv, 24. Cfr. viii, 21, 24.

contempt could induce Him to use it in His own defence, seemed to escape from His control when there was question of doing good to others. Let Him meet the poor or the sick, and swift as lightning this divine power escaped from His heart in acts of love. Sometimes it would almost seem as though He were no longer the master of it, as in the incomparable history of the poor woman who approached Him humbly from behind, saying, 'If I can but touch the hem of His garment, I shall be cured.' On certain occasions He even gave way to tears, and groanings, and unwonted trouble, which bore witness to the intensity of His love. Who does not recall the impulse of mercy which touched Him at Naim, by the side of the bier of the only son, and the sorrowing mother. . . . How shall we forget the unwonted agitation which He manifested at the tomb of Lazarus!"[1] Almost all the miracles of Jesus were prompted by His compassion for the needs of others, and this is why St. Peter, reminding his hearers of what had been the most constant and the most salient feature of our Lord's public life, said that Jesus "went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil."[2]

A last characteristic to be mentioned here in connection with Our Lord's miracles consists in

[1] E. Bougaud (transl. C. L. Currie), *An Argument for the Divinity of Jesus Christ*, pp. 58, 59 (W. H. Young, New York, 1901). [2] Acts x, 38.

this: they were never wrought for self. Search the Gospels, and you will find that while Jesus multiplies His miracles in behalf of others, He acts towards Himself as if He were absolutely powerless to supply His own wants in a miraculous manner. Rather than to resort to His power of performing miracles, He prefers to suffer hunger and thirst, to be absolutely destitute of the things of this world, to flee from His enemies as long as His own hour has not come, and then to be arrested, tried and sentenced to the most ignominious and cruel death of the Cross. Indeed, no clearer proof could be given than all this He voluntarily endured, and that during His entire mortal life He was the Divine Victim sent to atone for the sins of the world.

In these and other such respects, the miracles wrought by our divine Saviour will always appear to belong to a higher order than those of the Old Testament, and therefore lead the unbiased reader of Holy Writ, to see in them supernatural events, even more distinctly than in those which are contained in the Sacred Scriptures of the Old Covenant. And a similar conclusion will be forced upon him, when he closely compares the miracles directly connected with Our Lord's birth, earthly life, death, resurrection and ascension, with the more or less similar ones which are recorded in the Old Testament. This is plain, for instance, in connection with the annunciation of His birth to Mary, which

is so much more beautifully simple and elevated than the annunciation of Gedeon's birth, which is detailed in the book of Judges.[1] This is clear, likewise, in connection with the ministry of angels in the wilderness, when contrasted with the ministry of ravens to Elias; with the wonderful event on the mount of the Transfiguration, when compared with the vision granted to the same prophet or even to Moses on Mount Sinai;[2] and more particularly in regard to the miraculous features which marked Christ's death and ascension, when compared with the wonders, striking indeed, yet rather strange, which accompanied Elias' death and departure from this world.[3] As belonging to the same higher order of the miraculous, we may also mention the apparition of the holy angels at Christ's birth, praising God, and inviting humble shepherds to go and worship the new-born Saviour; the prophetic words of Simeon and Anna regarding the divine Child, on the day of the Presentation;[4] the heavenly voice heard at His baptism,[5] and again at a later stage in Our Lord's ministry;[6] etc.; all events in perfect harmony with the kingly and divine character of the Saviour of mankind, and also with the new and higher order of a dispensation intended to fulfil that of the Old Covenant.

[1] Judges vi, 11 sqq.
[2] III Kings xix, 9 sqq.; Exodus xxxiii, 13–23.
[3] IV Kings, ii.
[4] Luke ii, 25–38.
[5] Mark i, 12; etc.
[6] John xii, 28.

When we pass from the Gospels to the book of the Acts and the canonical Epistles of the New Testament, we are not surprised in the least, to find many striking miracles recorded therein. Since during His lifetime, Jesus had imparted to His disciples together with the mission of preaching, the power of performing wonders similar to His own in order to give authority to their words,[1] it is only natural to expect that the same power would be theirs, when after His departure, they were sent "to be witnesses unto Him in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth."[2] Besides, on the very eve of His passion and death, our divine Master solemnly declared to them: "He that believeth in me, the works that I do, he also shall do; and greater than these shall he do,"[3] so that we confidently look for supernatural deeds in the authentic records of their life and preaching. In point of fact, the miracles spoken of in the second part of the New Testament, as performed by the eleven surviving Apostles and by St. Paul, are similar in several ways to those performed by Our Lord. They not only bear the same generic names[4] of "signs," "wonders," and "powers," but consist also in predictions of future events,[5] in countless miracles of healing,[6] expulsion

[1] Matt. x, 7, 8, 14, 15. [2] Acts i, 8. Cfr. Mark xvi, 20.
[3] John xiv, 12. See also Mark xvi, 17, 18.
[4] II Cor. xii, 12; Acts v, 12; etc.; etc.
[5] Acts xx, 23 sqq.; xxvii, 22 sqq.; etc.
[6] Acts iii, 7; v, 16; ix, 34; xxviii, 9.

of demons,[1] resurrections,[2] etc.; and further, like those of Jesus, were performed in a certain, not a tentative, manner.

Two important differences, however, should be noticed between Our Lord's miracles, and those of His disciples, both before and after the Ascension. First, while as stated already, Jesus wrought miracles in His own name; the Apostles, on the contrary, performed wonderful deeds in the name of their divine Master,[3] and openly professed that by themselves they had neither "the strength" nor "the power" of healing;[4] and that "they also were mortals, men like unto other men."[5] This is not only in perfect harmony with Our Lord's predictive words recorded in St. Mark: "These signs shall follow them that believe: in my name they shall cast out devils . . . they shall lay their hands upon the sick and they shall recover;"[6] it proves also that though conscious of wielding a divine power, the disciples of Christ never lost sight of the fact that they were but the delegates and servants of Him, who is "all-mighty in heaven and on earth,"[7] and "in whose name, above all names, every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth and under the earth."[8]

A second difference likewise to be borne in mind,

[1] Acts v, 16; xvi, 18. [2] Acts ix, 37; xx, 9.
[3] Luke x, 17; ix, 49; Acts iii, 6, 16; iv, 10; ix, 34; xvi, 18; etc.
[4] Acts iii, 13. [5] Acts xiv, 14.
[6] Mark xvi, 17, 18. [7] Matt. xxviii, 18.
[8] Philip. ii, 9, 10. Cfr. Isai. xlv, 24.

consists in the comparatively large number of apostolic miracles, which in some respects, appear more marvelous than the wonders recorded of Our Lord in the Evangelical narrative. Of that description we shall simply mention the renewal of the Pentecostal wonders by the imposition of hands;[1] the bestowal of the gift of prophecy by the same means;[2] "the more than common miracles wrought by the hand of Paul, so that unto the sick were carried away from his body, handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them;"[3] and the healing virtue ascribed to the very shadow of the Prince of the Apostles, St. Peter.[4] In this same connection we may refer to the many divine gifts which were enjoyed by the members of the Church,[5] and which had not been bestowed on the believers during the lifetime of our Saviour. This apparent superiority of the miraculous in the primitive Church, had been foretold by its Founder, in these memorable words: "Amen, Amen, I say to you, he that believeth in me, the works that I do, he also shall do; and greater than these shall he do,"[6] and was the result of that special outpouring of the holy Spirit, which, according to the testimony of the beloved disciple, followed on the glorious ascension of Jesus.[7] Moreover, it is beyond

[1] Cfr. Acts viii, 17–19; xix, 6.
[2] Acts xix, 6.
[3] Acts xix, 11, 12.
[4] Acts v, 15, 16.
[5] Cfr. principally 1 Cor. xii, xiv.
[6] John xiv, 12.
[7] John vii, 39.

doubt that this extraordinary display of "powers" and "wonders" and "signs" at the beginning of the Christian era, was practically necessary to secure the triumph of a religion which "preached Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness,"[1] and which had to give as its credentials, "exceeding great miracles,"[2] in every way superior to those marvels by which ancient magic and idolatry bewitched the pagan world.[3]

In view of the foregoing remarks concerning the miraculous described in the New Testament, it is hard to see how the supernatural character of the wonderful deeds of Jesus and His apostles, could be seriously questioned by the unbiased reader of the sacred writings of the New Covenant. As however, particularly during the nineteenth century, Our Lord's miracles have been sharply assailed by unbelievers, we shall very briefly state their theories for explaining away his miraculous deeds, and subjoin a few general answers to their difficulties.

The expedients most in favor among Rationalists, to account for the Evangelical narratives of miracles without granting their supernatural character, are briefly these: (1) as it was assumed by the early Christian generations that the Messias at His coming would perform wonderful deeds, marvelous incidents were soon imagined in connection with the

[1] I Cor. i, 23. [2] Acts viii, 13. [3] Acts viii, 9–11.

life and work of Jesus, after the pattern of those that are found in the Old Testament; once imagined, they were freely circulated and easily believed, and finally embodied in our present Gospels; (2) our Gospels are legendary narratives, like the lives of some of the mediæval saints, in which natural occurrences have been exaggerated by the consentaneous enthusiasm and imaginative impulse of the primitive disciples, and thus gradually transfigured into supernatural events; (3) at the basis of the wonderful narratives in our Gospels, we have not natural occurrences, but simply parabolic descriptions, which in the course of time were taken for actual facts, and the record of which on that account, reads now as that of external and wonderful occurrences.

To these theories, partially disproved by what we said above in connection with the miraculous in the life and work of Our Lord, we shall oppose here, for brevity sake, but a few general considerations.[1] First, it may be shown that the objective reality of the miracles recorded in the Gospels is necessarily implied in the moral integrity of Our Lord's character. Jesus professed to work miracles; He gave them as God's testimony in His favor and as signs of His Messianic dignity; He vindicated their Divine character when they were ascribed to the agency of the Evil One; He was not only believed by His followers to be endowed with the power of working

[1] They are substantially borrowed from *Outlines of the Life of Our Lord*, by the present writer.

miracles, but He professed to impart a similar power to His Twelve Apostles and next to His seventy-two messengers, and after they had exercised themselves these miraculous powers, He confirmed them in their belief that He and they worked real miracles; He so acted that His very enemies could not help believing that He actually wrought miracles, and on several occasions He uttered awful woes against flourishing cities and against the Jewish rulers, because despite the stupendous miracles He had worked to convince them of His Divine mission and character, they had persevered in their rejection of His claims. From all this, it is plain that the veracity of Our Lord absolutely requires that we should admit that He worked real miracles, such miracles as those with which the Evangelists make us acquainted.

In the second place, the reality of these same miracles is no less clearly implied in the substantial integrity of the Gospels. Whatever their differences, the four Gospels agree in representing the public life of Jesus as an almost unbroken series of miracles. Hardly a day is described in them at any length without the record of one or several miracles of our Saviour. Again, throughout the Gospels, Our Lord's miracles are represented either as the occasion or as the subject-matter of His discourses; they are given as the chief reason why His enemies pursue Him as a Sabbath-breaker, and also why many believe in Him and the multitudes follow Him everywhere. In a word, to the attentive reader of the Gospels, it

must appear self-evident that the removal of the miraculous element from the Gospel narrative would destroy the connection, the strength and even the meaning of what would remain.

Lastly, had we not at our disposal, in the apocryphal Gospels, that is in productions going back to the early ages of Christianity, an actual means to realize what manner of miraculous mere human ingenuity could then invent in connection with Our Lord's person and work, we might perhaps be tempted to admit that the objections above recited, have a greater support on fact than is generally granted. But it is beyond doubt that the comparison which we can even now establish between the marvelous descriptions contained in those mere human productions, and the miracles recorded in our sacred narratives, proves to evidence that the latter could never have been imagined by men and times, such as those to which we owe our apocryphal Gospels. Examine the Gospel miracles one after another and you will find none performed as a mere display of power. They all arose naturally out of their occasions, they all served a useful purpose in connection with Our Lord's personal mission, and neither before nor after their performance can the least trace of ostentation or self-satisfaction be discovered on the part of Jesus. Viewed from this standpoint, His miracles offer the most striking contrast to the puerile, extravagant, grotesque, not to say absurd character of the miracles ascribed to Him in the

apocryphal Gospels: the former are manifest proofs of divine wisdom, the latter are but the play of human fancy.

In bringing to a close the present Lecture, we may truly say that an unbiased and diligent study of the miraculous in the Holy Scriptures, will ever produce a most powerful and most beneficial effect upon the Biblical student who believes in a personal God, as the Ruler of the universe, and the Revealer of moral and dogmatic truth. Despite the many difficulties, general and particular, which have been raised by others, or which may come up to his own mind, in reference to the miracles recorded in the Old and the New Testaments, a strong conviction will grow upon him, that their supernatural character must be distinctly admitted. The closer he will examine those wonderful facts, the more will he find that their purpose is not only superior to that of the marvels detailed in the sacred books of other ancient religions, but also truly worthy of divine wisdom, power and goodness. On the one hand, the Old Testament miracles will clearly appear to him the best-calculated means whereby the Almighty could preserve among the Jews of old so prone to idolatry, correct notions of His divinity, exalted ideas of the holiness required in His worshippers, and also a sufficient knowledge of His designs of mercy regarding the salvation of all men by Jesus Christ. On the other hand, the miracles recorded in the second part of the Bible,

will appear to him still more necessary to introduce first in Israel and next among the rest of mankind, that last and culminating stage of divine revelation, which is called the Christian religion. In other words, he will more clearly perceive the supernatural character of the Biblical miracles, because he will realize more distinctly that they "are not solitary, naked, unexplained, disconnected events, but are bound up with a system which is worthy of God, and impressed with God; which occupies a large space, and is operating, with great and increasing energy, in human affairs."[1]

As regards Our Lord's miracles in particular, the more one studies them, the more also will he find that they are an integrant part of the history of His mortal life, and convincing proof of His divine mission and character. The more he will ponder on them in a reverend frame of mind, the clearer also will he recognize the "finger of God"[2] in their production, and thereby feel drawn nearer and closer to the eternal Son of God, that is to the inexhaustive source of all moral goodness and perfection.

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[1] William E. Channing, *Evidences of Revealed Religion* (Works, Boston, 1892, p. 230). [2] Luke xi, 20.

LECTURE IX.

THE BIBLE AND THE POPULAR MIND.

"What the civil code is to the citizen, the Scripture is to the Christian. The Word of God, as well as the civil law, must have an interpreter, by whose decision we are obliged to abide."—(*Cardinal Gibbons*).

SYNOPSIS OF LECTURE IX.

The Bible and the Popular Mind.

I. Popular Interest in the Bible:
- Promoted by the Church in the Course of Ages.
- Its Extent at the Present Day:
  - Real indeed.
  - Though comparatively limited.

II. The Bible, a Difficult Book:
- Bearing of Statements in
  - Acts viii, 29–34.
  - II Peter iii, 15 sqq.
- Ever-growing Number of Commentaries for ordinary Readers.
- Endless Discussions among Biblical Scholars.

III. The Bible, not an absolutely Necessary Book:
- Revealed Religion existed in Theory and in Practice, before the Bible.
- After its Composition, it is not the only Source of Revealed Doctrine.
- Nor is it a Real Safeguard for Necessary Belief.

Concluding Remarks.

LECTURE IX.

The Bible and the Popular Mind.

> "What the civil code is to the citizen, the Scripture is to the Christian. The Word of God, as well as the civil law, must have an interpreter, by whose decision we are obliged to abide."—(*Cardinal Gibbons*).

Of the various views held in modern times concerning the relation of the Bible to the popular mind, that which has always been maintained by the Christian Church, is the only one which harmonizes perfectly with God's purposes in bestowing upon man the gift of His written word. It looks upon the Old and the New Law as a twofold code given by the Almighty to His creatures, in order that they may live according to His holy will here below, and secure an eternity of bliss in the world to come. Thence it rightly infers that God's written law deserves the greatest attention that can be bestowed upon it, while it no less rightly declares that owing to the difficulties inherent in the sacred text, its sense must needs be defined by an authorized and final interpreter. This is precisely the view embodied in a terse and happy manner, in the words of the eminent head of the Catholic American hierarchy, when he says: "What the civil code is

to the citizen, the Scripture is to the Christian. The Word of God, as well as the civil law, must have an interpreter, by whose decision we are obliged to abide."[1] This is also the view which forces itself upon any one who studies the Bible from the threefold standpoint of its interest, difficulty and necessity, that is in the light of the chief relations which it bears to the popular mind.

I. It would be a long and tedious task to describe in detail the manifold interest which has gathered around the Holy Scriptures, in the course of Christian ages. For our present purpose, however, it may not be amiss to recall a few facts calculated to make us realize something of the extent of the esteem and love which the children of the Church always felt for the Word of God.

No one will ever think of accusing the early Christians of a lack of reverence and love for the sacred writings of the Old Testament, or for those of the Apostles or the Evangelists. Inheritors of the deep respect of the Jews for the Word of God, and looking upon the early Epistles and the Gospels as works no less inspired than those of the ancient prophets, they soon read both the former and the latter in their public services and appealed to them both in their religious controversies. Yet, it is well known that owing to their general poverty[2] and

[1] Card. Gibbons, *The Faith of Our Fathers*, p. 102 (28th Edit. Baltimore, 1885). [2] I Cor. i, 26–28.

also to the expectation prevalent among them of the speedy return of the Lord,[1] most of them were not able or eager to secure, and in consequence did not possess, a copy of such inspired books with which they were acquainted. Again, the illiteracy of many Christians in the first and immediately-following centuries, together with the constant necessity of hiding themselves from the rage of their persecutors, go far towards explaining the fact, that though full of love and reverence for the divine Scriptures,—which were then known as "the true utterances of the holy spirit,"[2] "the oracles of the Lord,"[3] etc., —they became familiar with the various parts of the Bible only gradually, and almost exclusively by means of selections read in public meetings, and of homiletical discourses connected therewith. Manuscripts of the entire Scriptures were extremely rare; and however strange this may appear, the copies of parts of the New Testament were chiefly multiplied by heretical leaders, anxious to spread their wrong tenets, by means of what they called "correct" editions of the sacred text. Time and again, the bishops and priests of that age lifted up their voice, cautioning their flocks against such adulterated manuscripts of the New Testament writings, but indeed to little purpose; as the heresiarchs grew in number,

[1] II Thessal. ii, 2 sqq.; II Petr. iii, 3 sqq.; etc.
[2] St. Clement, I Corinth. xlv.
[3] St. Polycarp, Epist. to Philip. vii.

so did also the varying editions which they put forth in favor of their respective errors.[1]

To find something like a fairly large circulation of copies of the whole, or even of considerable parts of the Holy Scriptures among the faithful children of the Church, one has to wait till the fourth century, that is till the era of public freedom and imperial favor. Then it was that the orthodox emperor Constantine ordered fifty splendid copies of the Bible to be written and sent to the most important churches of the Roman world. Then it was also that such great scholars as St. Chrysostom, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, etc., treading in the footsteps of Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and others, promoted actively the advance of Biblical knowledge in the Church of God. But, of course, they could not suppress the general illiteracy and poverty of the faithful of their time, any more than their illustrious predecessors, so that the popular interest in the Bible, though somewhat increased by their far-famed labors, remained substantially the same, and the Christian people at large continued to depend on the public readings and homiletical discourses in church services, for its acquaintance with Holy Writ.

With the fall of the Western Roman empire (476 A. D.), under the repeated invasions of the barbarians, a new era, that of the Middle Ages,

[1] Cfr. *General Introduction to the Holy Scriptures*, by the present writer, p. 238 sq.

opens in the history of the Bible. It extends down to the capture of Constantinople by the Mohammedans in 1453, and has been often described as a period during which, Rome holding an undisputed sway, kept the Bible from the laity. The truth is, however, that during this long stretch of a thousand years, "the Church never failed to take due measures to bring the Scriptures within the reach of her children, and that she ever held fast and exercised profitably that guardianship conferred upon her by Almighty God for the protection and glory of His Holy Word."[1] As proofs of this assertion, we shall simply mention a few facts. The monks of the Middle Ages possessed, read, studied and copied the Sacred Scriptures for themselves, with a zeal, constancy and devotion, all the more admirable, because of "the circumstances of the period, the nature of the means by which books were multiplied, the comparative slowness with which they could be produced, and the absence of any cheap material, before the invention of paper, upon which they could be copied."[2]

Again, "the annals of the Middle Ages exhibit not a single instance in which the word of God was treated by the Church otherwise than with fervent and affectionate veneration . . . ; we seek in vain, in the records of mediæval centuries, for

[1] Pope Leo XIII, *Encyclical Letter on the Study of Holy Scripture.*

[2] L. A. Buckingham, *The Bible in the Middle Ages*, p. 38.

any act of the Church, in Her councils, tending even indirectly, to prevent or impede the reading and diffusion of authentic versions of the unmutilated Scriptures."[1] In point of fact, during the course of the Middle Ages, translations of the Bible into at least sixteen modern languages, were made, some of them with the avowed purpose of enabling lay people to have free access to the Sacred Scriptures. More than this, the Church inculcated with great zeal on the laity the prayerful reading of Holy Writ as the surest aid to spiritual perfection, and some of the monks of that period employed themselves in extracting from the Scriptures various passages applicable to particular circumstances, and thus forming manuals of prayer and meditation for people of the world. It is well known likewise, that in their schools the monks taught their pupils to understand correctly the inspired writings; and that in the universities, Scriptural lectures embodied the results of their zealous studies and prayerful meditations. In the monastic libraries, the Bible lay ever open to the search of all who sought to scan the sacred records; while in the churches, Bibles were placed for the use of the

[1] L. A. Buckingham, *ibid.*, p. 39.—It was not until 1229 A. D. that the first authoritative restriction on Bible reading was passed by a Council held at Toulouse. Inasmuch as heretics of the time mutilated the Bible in order to propagate their errors, the Council forbade the possession by laymen of the sacred books, especially in the vernacular.

laity, and concordances attached to facilitate their researches. Finally, there is evidence of Bible reading among lay people, in the Middle Ages, independently of that which was pursued in the schools and at church; and the fervor of their devotion to the word of God, is made manifest by the lavish munificence with which they devoted gold, and silver, and ivory, and precious gems, to the adornment of the volumes which contained the Holy Scriptures.

When about the middle of the fifteenth century, the invention of the printing press made it as easy, as it had been theretofore difficult, to multiply books of all descriptions, the Church did not show herself less indefatigable in promoting the printing, than she had in encouraging the copying of the sacred text. Before the first Protestant version was sent forth into the world, there appeared eighty-four printed editions of Holy Writ in the ancient languages, sixty-two in Hebrew, of which twelve were of the Old Testament entire, and fifty of selected portions; and twenty-two in Greek, of which three were of the Old Testament, twelve of the New Testament and seven of separate portions of the Scriptures. In the Latin, which occupied a special position, as being the universal language of the learned men of the time, there were published three hundred and forty-three editions, of which one hundred and forty-eight were of the entire Bible, sixty-two of the New Testament, and one hundred and thirty-three

of separate books of the inspired writings. In the modern languages, the dialects of the humblest and poorest among the people, there were issued one hundred and ninety-eight editions; of which one hundred and four were of the entire Bible, comprising twenty in Italian, twenty-six in French, nineteen in Flemish, two in Spanish, six in Bohemian, one in Sclavonic, and thirty in German; and ninety-four of single portions of Holy Writ, consisting chiefly of copies of the New Testament and the Psalms. In all, including the Polyglot printed at the cost of Cardinal Ximenes, six hundred and twenty-six editions of the Bible and portions of the Bible, of which one hundred and ninety-eight were in the languages of the laity, had issued from the press with the sanction and at the instance of the Church, in countries where she reigned supreme, before Luther's German version of the Bible appeared in 1534.[1]

In view of the facts we have just adduced, one will readily understand how well-founded are the remarks of a recent Protestant author, the Rev. E. Cutts, D. D., when he writes:[2] "There is a good deal of popular misapprehension about the way in which the Bible was regarded in the Middle Ages. Some people think that it was very little read, even by the clergy; whereas the fact is that the sermons of the mediæval preachers are more

[1] Cfr. L. A. Buckingham, loc. cit., pp. 59–64.

[2] *Turning points of English History*, pp. 200–201.

full of Scriptural quotations and allusions than any sermons in these days; and the writers on other subjects are so full of Scriptural allusion that it is evident their minds were saturated with Scriptural diction. . . . Another common error is that the clergy were unwilling that the laity should read the Bible for themselves, and carefully kept it in an unknown tongue that the people might not be able to read it. The truth is that most people who could read at all could read Latin, and would certainly prefer to read the authorized Vulgate to any vernacular version. But it is also true that translations into the vernacular were made. . . . We have the authority of Sir Thomas More for saying that 'the whole Bible was, long before Wyclif's days, by virtuous and well-learned men translated into the English tongue, and by good and goodly people with devotion and soberness well and reverently read.' . . . ." Indeed, writing in the *Academy* of August 7, 1886, Mr. Karl Pearson, also a Protestant writer, goes the length of saying: "The Catholic Church has quite enough to answer for . . . but in the fifteenth century, it certainly did not hold back the Bible from the folk; and it gave them in the vernacular a long series of devotional works which for language and religious sentiment have never been surpassed. Indeed, we are inclined to think it made a mistake in allowing the masses such ready access to the Bible. It ought to have recognized the Bible

once for all as a work absolutely unintelligible without a long course of historical study; and so far as it was supposed to be inspired, very dangerous in the hands of the ignorant." And, in the *Church Quarterly Review*, for October, 1879, an Anglican scholar distinctly states: "the notion that people in the Middle Ages did not read their Bibles is probably exploded, except among the more ignorant of controversialists. . . . The notion is not simply a mistake . . . it is one of the most ludicrous and grotesque blunders."

It would be equally easy to show that ever since the rise of Protestantism, the Church has not failed in her duty of fostering in the minds and hearts of her priests and of her laity the profound reverence and love due to God's holy word, and also of placing within the reach of all her children either the entire Scriptures, or at least those parts, as for instance, the New Testament, from which they could derive more spiritual advantage. It is true that at divers times and with varying degrees of severity, she has enacted decrees restricting the reading of Biblical translations into the vernacular tongues. But when examined without bias, all such decrees clearly appear to be the result of her maternal desire of suppressing as far as possible the abuses without ignoring or neglecting the advantages that might spring from the use of the Bible in the vernacular. This is manifestly the case with the enactment made in 1757 by Benedict

XIV., renewed and confirmed in 1829 by Pius VIII., and which is now practically the law throughout the length and breadth of the Catholic world. It reads as follows: "If these translations of the Bible into the vernacular have been approved by the Holy See or edited with notes taken from the holy Fathers or learned Catholic authors, they are allowable."

In conformity with this wise general rule, many new translations and editions, either of the whole or of parts of the sacred Scriptures, have been published in the vernacular German, Italian, French, and chiefly English; and it is well-known that the popular reading of such editions has been greatly encouraged both by the Holy See and by the Catholic bishops. We may recall here more particularly the laudatory words of Pius VI. writing to the archbishop of Florence, in 1778: "You judge exceedingly well that the faithful should be excited to the reading of the Holy Scriptures. . . . This you have seasonably effected by publishing the Sacred Writings in the language of your country, suitable to every one's capacity;" [1] and those of Pius VII. exhorting the English Vicars-Apostolic: "to encourage their people to read the Holy Scriptures; for nothing can be more useful, more consoling, and more animating, because they serve to confirm the faith, to support

[1] These words are prefixed to the ordinary copies of the Douay Version.

the hope, and to influence the charity of the true Christian." Nor can we forbear quoting the following hortatory words of the American episcopate, in the collective letter of the third plenary Council of Baltimore, to the clergy and laity of their charge: "It can hardly be necessary to remind you, beloved brethren, that the most highly valued treasure of every family library, and the most frequently and lovingly made use of, should be the Holy Scriptures. . . . We hope that no family can be found amongst us without a correct version of the Holy Scriptures. Among other versions, we recommend the Douay, which is venerable as used by our forefathers for three centuries. . . ."[1]

[1] *Pastoral letter of the third plenary Council of Baltimore*, pp. 20, 21.—In the same place, the Fathers of the Council quote to their flocks, a well-known passage from the *Following of Christ*, concerning the devout reading of Holy Writ. It runs thus: "The Holy Scriptures must be read in the same spirit in which they were written: if thou wilt derive profit, read with humility, simplicity and faith" (Book I, chap. v). In this connection, we wish to call attention to the following beautiful method suggested to his faithful Tyrolese, by the Archbishop of Brixen: "To read Holy Scripture, place thyself in the presence of thy Saviour and sit at His feet. Humbly acknowledge thy sins, and plead through His merits, for pardon. Entreat Him to grant thee heavenly illumination and divine love. Read then carefully and slowly step by step. At each point pause to reflect on the truth of that which thou hast read, and ask thyself: 1) What am I to believe? *Answer:* That which I have just read; and say: 'O Lord, I wish to believe this truth. Lord I do believe.—Help Thou my unbelief!' 2) What have

The spread and love of the Holy Scriptures among the faithful thus described by the Catholic bishops assembled in Baltimore, should not be regarded as overestimated, for in point of fact, nearly every Catholic family possesses a copy of the Bible, and holds it in great reverence, giving to it that prominent position which of right belongs to the inspired word of God. It is likewise certain, that, while perusing or listening to the reading of the sacred Scriptures, every devout Catholic, solidly grounded in his faith, feels it his bounden duty to show forth his deep respect and love for the inspired volume. Nor is there any doubt that on the occasion, and as a consequence of this pastoral letter of the Fathers of the last Council of Baltimore, and more particularly still, of the Encyclical letter put forth by Pope Leo XIII., in 1893, a remarkable increase of popular interest in the Bible and Biblical topics, has taken place among the faithful children of the Church.

It is true that in the eyes of many, the Protestants of the century just elapsed, appear to have done incomparably more than Catholics for spreading the

I now to do? *Answer:* Correct the faults which are opposed to this truth. 3) What have I hitherto done? *Answer:* Woe, is me, O Lord! I have acted contrary to this truth, and unlike the examples set me by Thee. 4) What shall I henceforth do? *Answer:* Lord, help me henceforth to better my life by the grace of Thy Holy Spirit."

knowledge and love of the Sacred Scriptures, at home and abroad. It should be borne in mind, however, that the claim set forth by some Protestant controversialists, who point to the millions of copies of God's holy word distributed by the Biblical societies throughout the world, as a convincing proof of their superiority over Catholics, in this regard, is without real foundation. In truth, "the Catholic Church loves the word of God too much to expose it to the nameless horror and frightful indignities to which it has been subjected by the action of those Societies.

"Of the results of this action, I will give a few examples. Archdeacon Grant in his Bampton Lectures, chap. iii, p. 93, tells us: 'The cause of the eagerness which has sometimes been evinced to obtain the sacred volume cannot be traced to a thirst for the Word of Life, but to secular purposes, the unhallowed uses to which the Holy Word of God, left in their hands, has been turned, and which are absolutely shocking to any Christian feeling.' 'They have been seen,' says Dr. Wells Williams, 'on the counters of shops in Macao, cut in two for wrapping up medicines and fruits, which the shopman would not do with the worst of his own books.'[1] 'They are employed,' says Bishop Courrazy, 'to roll round tobacco and bacon.'[2] Mr. Tomlin admits that the

[1] *The Middle Kingdom*, Vol. II, chap. xix, p. 343.
[2] *Annals of the Propagation of the Faith*, Vol. I, p. 107.

Chinese often stole them at night to apply them to domestic purposes, and that some of the missionaries appeared to consider this theft an encouraging proof of their zeal for Divine things. . . . . .

"So rapid is the consumption of Bibles in the various branches of the retail trade of Hindostan that of the millions circulated, it is difficult, except in the capitals to find so much as the trace of a single copy. This we are told by Captain J. B. Seely in *The Wonders of Elora*, chap. xix, p. 524, second edition. 'Many of them have probably gone to the pawnbrokers,' said Sir Charles Oakeley, Governor of Madras. In Ceylon they were used for much the same purposes as in India and China.

"In New Zealand, the Maories, according to Mr. Fox,[1] tore up the Bibles to make wadding for their guns, and even went so far, as Miss Tucker indignantly informs us, as to convert them into New Zealand cartridges. . . . . .

"In Persia, the Bibles were torn up in the presence of the missionary and trampled in the dirt. At Bassora, where Mr. Samuel, the missionary, was nearly torn to pieces, the Mohammedans, more reverential than the missionary, anxious as they said themselves, 'that a book which they as well as Christians consider sacred might not be trodden under foot, resolved that the volumes should all be thrown into the river, and this order was accord-

[1] *The Six Colonies of New Zealand*, p. 83.

ingly executed.'[1] Instances of usage such as this might be multiplied *ad infinitum*."[2]

As regards the amount of popular interest caused by the Bible among Protestants around us in the present day, it is much more limited than is commonly supposed. People were actually startled when, in spite of all they had heard of private and associated effort for the dissemination of the sacred text, of the publications of Bible societies, of Sunday school teaching, etc., they were told by Rev. C. F. Thwing, D. D., in the *Century Magazine* for May, 1900, that "ignorance about the Bible" is a growing phenomenon. Dr. Thwing's views have been briefly stated, and commented upon, in an editorial of the *Baltimore Sun*,[3] in the following significant manner. "The young men and young women of the present generation are far less familiar with the Bible than were their fathers and mothers at the same age. They do not read the Bible as much and are not obtaining equally the literary benefit had from constant acquaintance with its admirable English. This conclusion is derived from the result of test examinations set for boys in a Ohio university and for girls in an Eastern woman's college. Twenty-two passages containing simple Biblical allusions were

[1] *Narrative of a Mission to India*, by V. Fontanier, Vice-Consul of France at Bassora, p. 344.

[2] "Rome and the Bible," in the *Publications of the Catholic Truth Society*," Vol. XII, pp. 22–25.

[3] On Bible Reading, May 7th, 1900.

selected from Tennyson's poems and a freshman class of 34 men and a like class of 51 women were asked to explain them. The men were from Northern Ohio, Central New York and Western Pennsylvania; the women from New England. They were representatives of families in the enjoyment of average incomes, and had had opportunities above the average. With one exception, all had ecclesiastical connections. Yet the men answered but 43 per cent. of the questions correctly and the women but 49 per cent. Only one—a young woman—answered all the questions correctly.

"Of the 85 students hardly over 20 knew anything of the 'crown of thorns'; 40 were ignorant of Cain, Esau, Ruth and the tomb in which Christ was laid; 30 did not recognize the incident of Moses' striking a rock for water or Jacob's wrestling with an angel, 66 remembered nothing of Jonah's gourd, while an allusion to Ezechias floored 75. The girls were pretty well up on the story of Lot's wife, but of the 34 men only 22 bore it in their memories. This same number of the male students were stumped by a question relating to 'pearls and swine,' and 40 of the girls missed a reference to the guilt of Iscariot. One of the answers, indeed, made the amazing statement that Iscariot meant the cross, while another told of Ruth 'grieving for her children.' These were surpassed in an answer which seems to assume that Jonah's gourd was the emetic which caused 'the whale' to cast Jonah ashore. Taking

the answers together, they appear to Dr. Thwing to justify the conclusion that the present generation are growing up to paganism. The Bible he thinks is no longer a force in American literature and theology. 'Young people do not read it much, or if they do are not impressed by it.'

"The cause of this state of things the learned Doctor finds in the fact that young people nowadays have a great deal of reading matter thrown in their way—perhaps too much. 'The world has become,' he says, 'a world of books, a world of magazines and a world of newspapers.' . . . Books, magazines and papers of all sorts are now abundant and cheap, so that the Bible has many rivals. . . . The Bible does not hold the place it deserves in the instruction of the young at the present time."

There is no doubt that, as pointed out by Rev. Dr. Thwing, the light literature of our time, under its various forms (magazines, reviews, novels, etc.), with its thrilling stories, graphic descriptions, numerous and beautiful illustrations, supposed scenes from actual life, etc., etc., has appealed and does now appeal more powerfully to the imagination, feelings and also, of course, the passions of youth, than the antique stories or descriptions contained in the Sacred Scriptures, and is therefore a cause of distaste for even the word of God. But this is not the only cause of the lack of interest, which is now very prevalent among the young men and young women of this, and also of other countries. As

contributing powerfully to the production of the same regrettable result, we may more particularly mention: 1) the gradual vanishing of genuine and deep faith in the inspiration of the Bible from the minds of too many among those who are in charge of the education of youth; 2) the open or covert attacks against the historical character of the sacred books, which so often make their way into the newspapers, reviews and even novels of the day; 3) the general tone of society bent on forwarding temporal interests or material enjoyment, and therefore contrary to the teachings and spirit of the Holy Scriptures; 4) the silent exclusion of Biblical topics from the meetings of literary clubs, or from the conversations in the drawing rooms of polished society, while a close acquaintance with the latest profane literature is distinctly expected and made much of in all such quarters; 5) the well-nigh universal fact that neither in colleges, nor in universities, nor anywhere else, outside of schools preparatory for the ministry, actual knowledge of the contents of Holy Writ is required either for admission or for graduation; finally, 6) the fact, very often lost sight of by Protestants, but none the less true, that the sacred text offers many and great difficulties to the intelligence of ordinary readers. And this brings us to say a few words about the second relation in which the Bible stands to the popular mind, viz.: its difficulty.

II. Two passages of the New Testament are more particularly instructive as regards the difficulties,

which the Sacred Scriptures naturally present to the understanding of the ordinary reader. The first is found in the Acts of the Apostles, chap. viii, 26 sqq., where is given the following account of St. Philip's meeting with the Ethiopian eunuch.[1] "An angel of the Lord spoke unto Philip, saying: Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert. And he arose and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said unto Philip: Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said: Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said: How can I, except some one shall guide me? And he besought Philip, to come up and sit with him. Now the place of the Scripture which he was reading was this:

> He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;
> And as a lamb before his shearer is dumb,
> So he openeth not his mouth:
> In his humiliation his judgment was taken away:
> His generation who shall declare?
> For his life is taken from the earth.

[1] We give the passage in the words of the Revised Protestant Version of the New Testament, which appeared in 1881.

And the eunuch answered Philip, and said: I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other? And Philip opening his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture, preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on the way, they came to a certain water; and the eunuch said: Behold, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? . . ."

Several things are worthy of special notice in the report of this incident. There is first of all, the obvious fact that an important passage of Isaias was altogether beyond the comprehension of an Ethiopian grandee, though his native tongue was cognate with that of the Hebrew prophet. There is, in the second place, his open avowal that to realize the bearing of the prophet's words, he needed absolutely the help of a guide.[1] There is finally, the distinct record of a divine miracle wrought to supply him with the authorized interpreter whom he was willing to listen to. So that the whole incident reminds us naturally of many a passage even outside of the Old Testament

[1] "The eunuch," says a Protestant commentator on this passage, "feels that in a dark passage like that which he was reading he has need of trained instruction. He uses therefore the word which is employed for the guidance given by teacher to pupil. Our Lord uses it (Matt. xv, 14; Luke vi, 39) reproachfully of the blind guidance which the Scribes and Pharisees in His day were giving to the people who came to them for instruction." (J. Rawson Lumby, on the Acts of the Apostles, in the *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges.*)

prophets, the meaning of which appeared to us very obscure, and in connection with which we instinctively felt the need of an interpreter.

But the New Testament contains another passage which tells much more explicitly of the difficulties that await ordinary readers of the Word of God. It runs as follows: "And account the patience of Our Lord, salvation: as also our most dear brother Paul, according to the wisdom given, wrote to you; as also in all his epistles speaking in them of these things; in which are certain things hard to be understood; which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction."[1]

It is true that several Protestant writers of our day, do their very utmost to minimize the force of these words of St. Peter. Yet, they are powerless to do away with their plain meaning, viz.: that in a goodly number of St. Paul's epistles, "there are certain things hard to be understood," and that "in them," as also "in the other Scriptures," there are passages "which the unlearned and the unstable" are liable to "wrest to their own destruction." They are powerless likewise, to do away with the fact that the ever-growing number of commentaries and other works intended to facilitate the understanding of the Bible, which are published by their different sects, proves far less an "ever-growing interest in Biblical topics," than the obscurity of

[1] II Petr. iii, 15, 16.

Holy Writ; all the more so because when commented upon by scholars belonging to different denominations, even the most important passages are represented as yielding an altogether different sense.[1] Nor should we be astonished at this, when we recall to mind what happened to the early Reformers after they had rejected the authority of those to whom Christ has said: "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you;"[2] "He that heareth you, heareth Me, and He that despiseth you, despiseth Me;"[3] "Go therefore, teach ye all nations . . . behold I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world."[4] Luther proclaimed indeed the *perspicuity* of Scriptures in the following terms: "The Holy Ghost is the plainest writer and speaker that is in heaven and on earth: therefore His words can have no more than the one simple meaning which we call the scriptural or literal sense."[5] To this he added the *absolute right of private judgment*, in virtue of which every Christian may, and indeed, must, test his faith by Scripture. But such principles could be far more easily formulated than applied, so that it is not surprising to find that Luther himself was not a little puzzled when he was confronted with the fact that despite

[1] See Cardinal Gibbons' valuable remarks in this connection (*The Faith of Our Fathers*, p. 108 sqq.).

[2] John xx, 21. [3] Luke x, 16.

[4] Matt. xxviii, 19, 20.

[5] Answer to Emser, quoted by George T. Ladd, *The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture*, Vol. II, p. 169.

the affirmed perspicuity of Scripture, there is scarcely a verse in Holy Writ which has not been interpreted in different ways, and when Zwingli, the Anabaptists, Carlstadt, etc., all appealed to the right of private judgment to interpret Scripture in a sense opposed to his own. Nor is it very surprising to find that, despairing to settle exegetical difficulties by simple appeals to the Bible, Melancthon and Calvin should have advocated recourse to an authority distinct from the Holy Scriptures. The former proposed that all should abide by "a consensus of pious men;" the latter wished that "a synod of true bishops" should be obeyed. Such views were rejected by Luther, who, together with Zwingli, maintained that, in difficult passages, Holy Writ should be interpreted according to "the analogy of faith," that is, according to the whole tenor of Scripture teaching. But as by the analogy of faith, the early reformers soon understood *harmony with received doctrines*, the Lutheran rule of interpreting the Bible according to "the analogy of faith," was "soon made to mean the same as the old Romish rule that no explanation is to be admitted which runs counter to the current ecclesiastical dogmas."[1]

As time went on, and as the *a priori* principles of the early Reformers had to be set aside, at least in practice, if not in theory, it became clearer and clearer to Protestant scholars, how difficult a task it is to understand the Bible. The publication and

[1] Farrar, *History of Interpretation*, p. 333.

discussion of the various readings connected with the sacred text, chiefly of the New Testament, rendered it many times impossible for any critic to define which reading should be considered as the primitive one.[1] Again, it was realized that in "many passages of the prophetical and poetical books, the language is so obscure, and the train of thought so difficult to grasp, that even the best scholars, with every help which philology can offer, will not venture to affirm that they possess a certain interpretation. Difficulties of this sort are not confined to a few corners of the Bible. They run through the whole volume, and force themselves on the attention of every one who desires to understand any book of the Bible as a whole."[2] Another

[1] For details, cfr. *General Introduction to the Study of the Holy Scriptures*, Part II, by the present writer.—See also the interesting remarks in the Catholic Truth Society publications, Vol. XII, *Rome and the Bible*, p. 11 sqq.

[2] W. Robertson Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, 2d edit., p. 5.—A little before, the same learned Professor remarks significantly: "A study of the Bible which is exclusively practical and devotional is necessarily imperfect. There are many things which do not lend themselves to an immediate practical purpose, and which in fact are as good as shut out from the circle of ordinary Bible-reading. I know that good people often try to hide this fact from themselves, by hooking on some sort of lesson to passages which they do not understand, or which do not directly touch any spiritual cord. . . . People satisfy themselves in this way, but they do not solve the difficulty. Let us be frank with ourselves, and admit that there are many things in Scripture in which unsystematic and merely devotional reading finds no profit. . . . ." (*The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, New York, 1892, p. 4 sq.).

Protestant authority, Mr. Karl Pearson, writing in the *Academy*, in 1886, went the length of saying that "the Bible . . . is a work absolutely unintelligible without a long course of historical study;"[1] while the eminent Protestant English lawyer, W. Samuel Lilly, openly declared a little later, that: "The average man is as well fitted to interpret the Bible as he is to lecture on the Hegelian philosophy, or to settle fine points of Hindu law."[2] Plainly we are very far from Luther's supposed *perspicuity* of the Scriptures. God's holy law, it is true, was not made designedly obscure, any more than human legislation of past ages or of our own day. But it is no less true, that the same divine law, like any code framed for man's use, demands professional skill and knowledge to be correctly explained, for without this, it is very often beyond the reach of ordinary minds, and even with it, remains a text quite difficult to understand aright. Hence we are not surprised to find that it is written: "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth."[3]

III. It may then well be surmised that, since the Bible is so difficult a work to be interpreted by "the average man," and even by "the best scholars supplied with every help which philology can offer," God never intended it should be a book absolutely

[1] The *Academy* for Aug. 7, 1886.
[2] Lecture reported in the London *Tablet*.
[3] Malachy, ii, 7.

necessary to the people at large. Nor is this a mere surmise, however plausible it might appear. It is an important truth, proofs of which are forthcoming. "Consider the history of religion. The faith which is the assurance of things hoped for, the test of things not seen, existed for ages without any Scriptures. Abel, Enoch, Noe, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Gedeon, Barac, the judges and heroes of Israel—what Bible had they? Many of them none at all. And what Bible had David and Solomon and the early Kings and prophets, and the thousands who in their days never bowed the knee to Baal? Yet all these, having served God in their generations, fell asleep. And was their religious life less deep than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites who, in that long and dreary interval in which the living voice of prophecy had ceased, had access to the sacred literature which Esdras and his successors had edited? But they used it mainly to crush the essentials of mercy, justice, and truth, and glorify the ritualistic trivialities of phylactery and fringe, till their religionism brought forth its natural empoisoned fruit in the spiritual atrophy which led them to murder the Lord of Glory.

"And if the religion of the Hebrews existed anterior to and independently of the Old Testament, so did Christianity exist anterior to and independently of the New. The early Christians—those in the first century, whose glow of enthusiasm and love gave the first impulse to the evangelization of the

world,—had no Gospels and no Epistles. Their exultation and exceeding joy in the midst of poverty and persecution were maintained, not by written records, but by the constant sense of Christ's living presence." [1]

As I have pointed out elsewhere,[2] "one of the leading features of the age of the New Testament writers consists in the fact that in their eyes, and in those of their Christian contemporaries, preaching, not writing, was the regular method of spreading the Gospel. Christ's mission here below had been to preach 'the Gospel of the Kingdom of God,'[3] and this same mission He had intrusted to His chosen disciples, saying: 'As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you;'[4] 'going therefore, teach ye all nations.'[5] Conscious of their sublime mission, the Apostles considered it their supreme duty 'to speak the things which they had seen and heard,'[6] and not to burden themselves with other occupations which, however useful, would interfere materially with 'the ministry of the Word.'[7]

"So was it also with the great Apostle of the Gentiles. Paul was called to the Apostolate for no other purpose than to preach the Gospel,[8] and this was an imperative duty in his eyes, for, says he:

[1] F. W. Farrar, *The Bible, its Meaning and Supremacy*, p. 179 sq.
[2] *General Introduction to the Study of the Holy Scriptures*, p. 88.
[3] Mark i, 14; Luke iv, 43.
[4] John xx, 21. [5] Matt. xxviii, 19; cfr. Acts i, 8.
[6] Acts iv, 19, 20; x, 42. [7] Acts vi, 2, 4.
[8] Acts ix, 15; xxii, 15; xxvi, 16, 17; I Cor. i, 17.

'Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel . . . . for a dispensation is committed to me.'[1]

"Further, it stands to reason that oral teaching accompanied 'with signs and wonders,'[2] could alone implant the faith among illiterate men such as were the first converts generally. In like manner, only oral teaching could truly preserve the Christian faith among them after they had embraced it; and this is why we see the Apostles and their successors continuing to visit the churches they had founded,[3] or setting over them faithful men capable of keeping up the teaching of the Apostles after their departure."[4] Clearly in all this, no one could discover even the least intention on the part of the Founder and first preachers of Christianity, that what existed already of the Bible, should be considered as an absolutely necessary book.

But further, the purpose for which many of the New Testament writings were composed is distinctly known. The Epistles were written to different Churches (the church at Rome, at Corinth, at Philippi, etc.), or to individual disciples (Timothy, Titus, etc.); that is in both cases, to persons who had already learned their religion and become Christians. They were directed to them with a view to strengthen them in what they already knew, and to correct in them things which had

[1] I Cor. ix, 16, 17. [2] I Thess. i, 5; Acts xv, 12, etc.
[3] Acts xv, 36.
[4] Acts xiv, 21, 22; I Cor. xvi, 15; I Tim. iii; II Tim. ii, 2; etc.

got wrong. In like manner, St. Luke's purpose in composing his Gospel is explicitly stated. He tells his friend, Theophilus, that he has written in order that he (Theophilus) might know the certainty of the things in which he had been instructed. So that these sacred writings of the New Testament were not intended as a necessary means of salvation for future generations: they were composed for the distinct purpose of confirming the Christians of the first century in the faith they had received by means of oral instruction. And it may be noticed in passing, that all such writings could be of real avail for this purpose, only in so far as their contents were truly in harmony with the teachings already imparted by word of mouth.[1]

The Bible then, is not an absolutely necessary book, since impartial history shows to evidence that the religion of Israel "existed anterior to and independently of the Old Testament writings," and that this is also the case with Christianity in regard to those of the New Covenant. But there is a second, and no less convincing proof, that the Bible is not an absolutely necessary book: after its composition, it is not the only source of revealed doctrine.

It is true that ever since the Reformation, Protestant ministers have claimed that "the Bible, and the Bible alone must be the Christian's guide."

[1] Cfr. in particular I Cor. xi, 2; II Thess. ii, 14; iii, 4.

It may well be doubted, however, whether they are sincere in keeping up such theory, seeing that ever since the rise of Protestantism, they have acted in direct opposition to it. "We often hear the shibboleth," says excellently Cardinal Gibbons,[1] 'the Bible, and the Bible only, must be our guide.' Why then do you go to the useless expense of building fine churches, and Sabbath-schools? What is the use of your preaching sermons and catechizing the young, if the Bible at home is a sufficient guide for your people? The fact is, you Reverend gentlemen contradict in practice what you so vehemently advance in theory. Do not tell me that the Bible is all-sufficient; or if you believe it is self-sufficient, cease your instructions. Stand not between the people and the Scriptures."

Again, looking at the principle itself: "The Bible, and the Bible only, must be our guide," one might naturally desire to know where this most important doctrine is drawn from. Apparently, it should be derived from the Bible itself, since we are told, "it and it only, must be our guide." In reality, we would search for it in vain through the Scriptures, —even through the Catholic Bible, the sole that contains all the inspired books,[2]— for most certainly it is not stated therein; and in point of fact, no Biblical passage was ever brought forth as identical

[1] *The Faith of Our Fathers*, p. 102 sq. (Baltimore, 1885).

[2] We have proved this at length, in our *General Introduction to the Study of the Holy Scriptures* (New York, 1900).

with or equivalent to it. On the contrary, whoever puts together the Scriptural passages that have a bearing upon the question at issue, will readily see that the teaching of the written word does not exclude the imparting of revealed doctrine by oral instruction. It is not the Bible, but "the Church," that is a living organization of Christ's members under the headship of the Prince of the Apostles, and destined to live to the end of times, "which is the pillar and ground of the truth."[1] The mission of preaching intrusted by Christ to His Apostles, is described as one which is to go on indefinitely by means of worthy ministers of the Gospel; for we read: "The things which thou hast heard from me through many witnesses, the same intrust to faithful men, who will be competent to instruct others also;"[2] and again: "For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and shouldest ordain priests in every city, as I also appointed thee,"[3] etc. But more particularly do we notice that St. Paul, when writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, insists on the necessity of holding to tradition. In his first Epistle to the Corinthians, he says: "Now I praise you, that ye remember me in all things, and hold fast the traditions, even as I delivered them to you;"[4] and in his second Epistle to the Thessalo-

[1] I Tim. iii, 15. [2] II Tim. ii, 2. [3] Titus i, 5.

[4] I Cor. xi, 2.—The rendering given is that of the Revised Protestant Version published in 1881.

nians, he writes: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word, or by epistle of ours."[1] Truly in presence of such Scriptural statements, it is difficult to see how any one sincerely desirous of abiding by the teaching of the written word of God, must not feel compelled by its very authority, to look upon tradition as the primitive source of revealed doctrine, which did not cease to exist because to it was gradually added another which also contains tradition, but this time in writing.

This truth will impress itself still more powerfully on the unbiased reader of the New Testament, when he bears in mind the following facts: 1) the faithful of the second century and their authorized teachers must manifestly have known whether or not oral tradition had been superseded by the written word, and yet they always take it for granted that both are actual sources of revealed doctrine;[2] 2) the Christian Church which is "the pillar and ground of the truth," which the Holy Spirit is to guide to the end of times, has always maintained, in theory and in practice, that both the written and the oral word of God, are sources of revelation; 3) God's wisdom and goodness which shines forth in the institution of a Church, as the permanent and infallible teacher of mankind always made up chiefly of

[1] II Thessal. ii, 14 (in Protestant Versions, verse 15).

[2] See some of their testimonies in the *Catholic Dictionary*, art. Tradition, p. 800.

multitudes to whom the Bible is either inaccessible or at least very obscure, and in whom deep faith, hope and love have been or can be easily produced by oral instruction.

"But how did the opposite error arise which is such a common one among English people? In this way: About 300 years ago several sects separated from the Church. They went out of the Church, but they took the Church's Bible away with them. Then they tried to make the Bible do double duty, that is, to be instead of Bible and Church. Or rather, they put each reader into the place of the Church as the interpreter of Scripture. They said: Every man can find his religion for himself out of the Bible. They said: If a man can read his Bible, and if he has common sense, then let him pray to God and he will be guided aright. Yes; but what is the result of this? We see a number of sects (more than 200 in England)[1] differing from one another so much that they cannot unite together. There is no Christian doctrine which some sect does not deny. Yet they one and all appeal to the Bible and say that they find their religion there.

"Are there, then, more than 200 different religions in the Bible? No; but these good people have been using the Bible in a way in which it was never meant to be used. They have forgotten, or they have never learnt, that the rule is this: the Church teaches and the Bible proves. God has given us the Church

[1] This is of course true also of the denominations in America.

to be our guide. The Church is the pillar and ground of the truth (I Tim. iii, 15). If we reject the Church which God has given to guide us, we have no right to expect any other guidance from Him. . . . They follow their own human spirits and think all the while that they are being led by God. And the proof of it is that those who will not be guided by the Church split up into innumerable sects. This is not God's work. 'God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.' . . . . Being 'unlearned and unstable, they wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction' (II Petr. iii, 16). It is not really honoring the Bible to put it into the place of the Church."[1]

These forcible words of a recent Anglican writer will dispense me from insisting on a last proof of the truth that the Bible is not an absolutely necessary book: it is not a real safeguard for necessary belief. For he tells us, and unfortunately his assertion is perfectly correct, that: "there is no Christian doctrine which some sect does not deny; yet, they (the sects) one and all appeal to the Bible, and say that they find their religion there." In point of fact, not simply the august mystery of Christ's real Presence in the Holy Eucharist, the infallible authority of the Christian Church, etc., etc.; but the very divinity of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, has been denied by men who profess to draw their religion from the Bible alone. The

[1] St. Bartholomew's Church Tracts, No. 6. *Is the Bible, and the Bible only, the Religion of Protestants,* p. 4 sqq.

Bible is so little a real safeguard for necessary belief, that those best acquainted with it, viz.: the leading scholars of Germany and other Protestant countries, have lost their hold on the very essentials of Christian and revealed belief. In their eyes, supernatural revealed doctrine is not to be found in the Bible any more than in the other sacred books of ancient religions, and the religion described in the Bible is *simply one* of the many religions of the world, not *the only true* worship of God. No wonder then, that under the influence of such leaders, whose theories are scattered broadcast by reviews, magazines and productions of all kinds, unbelief of the most thoroughgoing character should gradually leaven the masses of Europe and America, and that as stated in the *Baltimore Sun*, already quoted, "the present generation are growing up to paganism," or at least to indifference in regard to any distinct belief in Christian dogmas. And the worst feature of it all, consists in the fact that, while the Bible does not state explicitly what is the necessary belief, its teachings are submitted by Protestants at large, to man's private judgment, so that private judgment, or in other words, mere human reason, not the Scripture, is the supreme rule of Protestant belief. Hence the natural but most disastrous consequence that each one has a perfect right to regard as necessary or unnecessary beliefs, those which he thinks must be considered as such. So that in the Protestant system, the Bible is neither in theory nor in

practice, a real safeguard for the truths which Christians of past ages have justly regarded as beliefs necessary for salvation.

At the end of this Lecture, I wish briefly to recall its leading conclusions. First of all, it is not true "that the Catholic Church is opposed to the reading of the Scriptures, or that she is the enemy of the Bible. The Catholic Church the enemy of the Bible! . . . But for fifteen centuries, she was the sole guardian and depository of the Bible; and if she really feared that sacred Book, who was to prevent her, during that long period, from tearing it in shreds and scattering it to the winds? . . . That venerable Volume has survived the wars and revolutions and the barbaric invasions of fifteen centuries. Who rescued it from destruction? The Catholic Church. Without her fostering care, the New Testament would probably be as little known to-day, as 'the Book of the days of the Kings of Israel' (III Kings xiv, 19)."[1] But further, it is absolutely true that "the notion that people in the Middle Ages did not read their Bibles is probably exploded, except among the more ignorant of controversialists. . . . The notion is not simply a mistake. . . . It is one of the most ludicrous and grotesque blunders,"[2]

[1] Cardinal Gibbons, *The Faith of Our Fathers* (Baltimore, 1885), p. 112 sq.

[2] *The Church Quarterly Review*, October, 1879.

when one bears in mind the manifold care and wonderful success, with which the Church managed to bring and keep within the reach of her children the Scriptures in their respective vernacular tongues, long before the Reformation was even dreamt of.

In the second place, the Bible is a difficult book to interpret, and this is distinctly realized by no one better than by those specialists, who are truly desirous to make out its meaning, not simply "to hook on some sort of lesson to passages which they do not understand," and who frankly confess that: "in many passages of the prophetical and poetical books, the language is so obscure and the train of thought so difficult to grasp, that with every help which philology can offer, they cannot venture to affirm that they possess a certain interpretation. The difficulties of this sort are not confined to a few corners of the Bible; they run through the whole volume. . . ."[1] Indeed to my mind, the sacred Text is hardly less difficult to be made out by the average reader, than a treatise of grammar or rhetoric by a child, or a technical work on mechanics or law by an untrained youth.

Finally, the Holy Scriptures were never meant to be an absolutely necessary book, and the *only Rule of Faith*, for the very obvious reason that faith existed before it, can exist without it, and may be altogether lost by men most conversant

[1] Prof. W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Old Testament in the Jewish Church* (New York, 1892), pp. 4, 5.

with it. In truth, "what the civil code is to the citizen, the Scripture is to the Christian. The Word of God, as well as the civil law, must have an interpreter, by whose decision we are obliged to abide."[1] And this interpreter is no other than "the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth,"[2] an infallible teacher of "all nations,"[3] and whose decision we are bound to respect and obey as we would that of the very Son of God: "He that heareth you, heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me."[4]

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[1] Cardinal Gibbons, *The Faith of Our Fathers*, p. 102.
[2] I Tim. iii, 15. [3] Matt. xxviii, 19, 20. [4] Luke x, 16.

LECTURE X.

THE BIBLE, THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD.

"The books of the Old and the New Testaments are held by the Church as sacred and canonical . . . because having been written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their Author, and have been delivered as such to the Church herself."—(*The Vatican Council*).

SYNOPSIS OF LECTURE X.

THE BIBLE, THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD.

- **I. Preliminary Remarks:**
  - General Notion of Biblical Inspiration (Its Difference from Revelation).
  - Importance and Difficulty of Questions connected with Biblical Inspiration.

- **II. The Proofs of Biblical Inspiration:**
  1. The Principal Critical Arguments briefly Stated and Examined.
  2. Appeals to the Authority of
     - Christ and the Apostles.
     - the Early Church.
  3. The Absolutely Satisfactory Ground: the Divine Authority of the Living Church.

- **III. Nature and Extent of Biblical Inspiration:**
  1. Nature of Inspiration:
     - The Leading Protestant Theories of the Day.
     - The Common Teaching of the Church.
     - Questions freely Debated among Catholic Scholars.
  2. Extent of Inspiration:
     - Positions common to all Catholic Scholars.
     - Points concerning which they are still at Variance.

Concluding Remarks.

LECTURE X.

The Bible, the Inspired Word of God.

"The books of the Old and the New Testaments are held by the Church as sacred and canonical . . . because having been written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their Author, and have been delivered as such to the Church herself."—(*The Vatican Council*).

Of all the literary treasures entrusted to the care of the Christian Church, and faithfully handed down by her from generation to generation, the one most precious in her eyes has always been and will ever be the Holy Scripture. The first part of the Bible she inherited from the Jews, when "the Kingdom of God," (and together with it, "the divine oracles" they had received in keeping), was transferred to her as the new "Israel of God."[1] She was gradually provided with the second part by the Almighty in order that she might make good in the eyes of all nations, her title to the possession of that kingdom, by showing in her Founder and in her own institution, the fulfilment of "the Law and the Prophets."[2] No wonder then that, conscious

[1] Cfr. Matt. xxi, 43; Galat. vi, 16; Rom. iii, 2.
[2] Matt. v, 17, 18; Acts ii, 16 sqq.; etc.

of such a value of these two co-ordinate parts of the Bible, the Church "led into the whole truth" by the Holy Spirit,[1] should have always held them in the highest esteem. The chief reason, however, of her constant and profound reverence for both the Old and the New Testament writings, consists in her unfaltering belief that both are equally the inspired word of God: "The books of the Old and the New Testaments," as she solemnly declared in the last ecumenical Council of the Vatican,[2] "are held by the Church as sacred and canonical . . . . because having been written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost,[3] they have God for their Author, and have been delivered as such to the Church herself." And on this account, it is only right that we should devote one of the "Biblical Lectures," to a brief study of that most important feature of the Bible, which is called Inspiration.

I. It would indeed be difficult to set forth in fewer words the general notion of Biblical Inspiration, than is done by the Fathers of the Vatican Council in the declaration just quoted. Viewing the sacred books of both Testaments in the light of Catholic tradition, they regard all such writings as having undergone in their composition a special influence of the Holy Spirit, in virtue of which

[1] John xvi, 13.

[2] Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Filius*, chap. ii.

[3] The original Latin of the Vatican declaration implies conjoint authorship of the sacred writers and of the Holy Ghost who inspires them (Spiritu Sancto inspirante, conscripti [libri]).

they must be referred to God as their principal Author. Of this special influence of the Holy Ghost, the Vatican Fathers speak as an actual breathing into the sacred writers, somewhat analogous to the action by which God is represented as breathing man's soul into his body,[1] and as "giving understanding" to men;[2] but yet different from it in this, that the divine breathing which came upon certain men and made them inspired, was imparted for the purpose of transmitting truth by writing to their fellow-men.[3]

In point of fact, it is the specific commission of transmitting truth to others, which distinguishes the supernatural gift of Inspiration from that of Revelation. By Revelation is understood the direct disclosure by God to man of something unknown to him; whereas by Inspiration is meant that actuating energy of the Holy Ghost, by the influence of which men especially selected by God, made truth known to others. "It is quite true," according to the judicious words of the Translators of Schanz's *Christian Apology*,[4] "that, in a general sense, the recipients of Revelation and the message they receive, may be, and are commonly said to be, inspired; but we must not lose sight of the fact

[1] Genesis ii, 7; Wisdom xv, 11. [2] Job xxxii, 8.

[3] Cfr. II Petr. i, 21. See also the remarks concerning this passage of St. Peter, which are found in my *General Introduction to the Holy Scriptures*, p. 471 sq.

[4] Preface to English translation of vol. ii, pp. v, vi (2d Edit. 1896).

that, in so calling them, we are prescinding from the specific concept of inspiration. An inspired book—for here, we have to deal exclusively with books—means something else than a book containing divine revelation, even though there be nothing in the book but what has been divinely revealed. The recipient of God's words might, of his own accord, write down, and that too, most faithfully, the truths mysteriously communicated by God; and inasmuch as such a record would contain divine truth, it would doubtless be a divine book; not for that, however, would the volume be inspired. For the inspiration of a book it is required that the divine message should have been given with a view to its subsequent transmission by writing. . . . Thus, inspiration does not directly and immediately fall upon the material contents, but on their formal enunciation in writing. In this view of the matter, it is quite plain that revelation is not identical with inspiration, and that a book may contain revealed truth, while yet failing to be an inspired book." The difference thus far drawn between revelation and inspiration, will be clearly realized by an illustration. Suppose one to whom his friend has simply disclosed a secret, he would be like to one who has simply received a revelation. Suppose on the contrary, the case of a man, who beside receiving such a disclosure, would receive the mission of transmitting it to others, he would be like to one truly inspired. However faithfully

the former can make a written record of the secret disclosed to him, his work will simply contain a revelation; whereas, let the latter write down for the benefit of others the revelation made to him but intended for them, his record will justly be considered as inspired. But there is a further difference worthy of a passing notice, between revelation and inspiration. Revelation implies the supernatural communication from God to man of a truth unknown to him, but it is not necessarily so with Inspiration. "In many cases," as E. Lévesque judiciously remarks, "a revelation will not be necessary to the sacred writer; he knows the things naturally, either as a witness, or by the affirmation of others, or by reliable documents; he needs only inspiration. . . . Revelation never constitutes inspiration: they are two things quite distinct, just like to receive truth and to [authoritatively] transmit it."[1]

Biblical Inspiration may therefore be described as a divine and positive influence exerted upon certain men for the purpose of transmitting truth to others, and in such a manner that the books composed by the sacred writers have God for their Author. This is obviously only a general notion of Biblical Inspiration; nevertheless it allows us to realize something of the great importance which attaches to the many questions connected with this

[1] E. Lévesque, *Essai sur la Nature de l'Inspiration des Livres Saints*, p. 5 (p. 7 in the Engl. Transl.).

important and living topic. It is because Inspiration makes of the Biblical records the very word of God, that it imports so much that the proofs of its existence should be absolutely conclusive, that its nature should be accurately known, and that its extent should be sufficiently determined. Take, for instance, the first of these general topics. On the one hand, unbelievers desirous of disproving the fact of a revealed religion, will naturally feel it incumbent upon them to show that the grounds set forth in favor of the inspired character of the written records of such religion, are of no value; while on the other, Protestants, who rest their whole belief in a divine revelation, upon the written Word of God, will consider it still more imperative on their part, to establish by irresistible arguments the fact of Biblical Inspiration. And even Catholics, who build their faith primarily on the teaching of a living Church, "the pillar and ground of the truth,"[1] must also be deeply interested in knowing what, and how far conclusive, are the arguments usually brought forth in favor of this point of the Church's belief. The other two general questions referring, the one to the nature, and the other to the extent of Biblical Inspiration, are likewise of great importance in our day. As we have already stated elsewhere,[2] "in the eyes of unbelievers bent on disproving the supernatural origin of Chris-

[1] I Tim. iii, 15.

[2] *General Introduction to the Study of the Holy Scriptures*, p. 542 sq.

tianity, it imports supremely so to restrict the extent and lower the nature of Biblical Inspiration as to make it appear practically identical with the kind of sacredness which Oriental nations have ever claimed for their own religious books. On the other hand, it is of still greater importance to all believers in the divine character of the biblical records, not to allow such a desecration of Holy Writ, but rather to vindicate against all attacks its true and full inspiration. To most Protestants, in particular, so accustomed to look upon the whole Bible as absolutely and perfectly divine, the least effort to restrict the extent of its inspired character naturally appears as a sacrilegious attempt to do away with its inspiration altogether, and consequently to destroy the very basis of the Christian religion. As to Catholics, it is true that, in their eyes, the same questions are not invested with so vital an importance, because their faith rests not on the Bible alone, but also on the Church. It is nevertheless true that any opinion concerning the nature and extent of Biblical Inspiration that would depart widely from the traditional teaching, must cause concern to them, and especially to the pastors of the Church, who are divinely commissioned to watch over the perfect purity of revealed doctrine.[1] In point of fact, it was this that prompted Leo XIII., a few years ago, to issue

[1] Cfr. I Tim. vi, 20; II Tim. iii, 14; Luke xxii, 32; Acts xx, 27–31.

the Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* on the 'Study of Holy Scripture,'[1] wherein he sets forth the traditional concept of inspiration and declares that positions recently assumed by some Catholic writers regarding the nature and extent of Biblical Inspiration 'cannot be tolerated.'"

Equal to the importance of these questions is their intricacy. It is true that for Catholics, the existence of Biblical Inspiration does not offer any special difficulty, since their faith in it, is based on the infallible teaching of the living Church; but it is far from being so, as regards its nature and extent. For, on the one hand, there has as yet been no solemn definition framed to settle those questions; and on the other, objections without number and of the most perplexing kind, have been vigorously and persistently urged by scholars against the traditional view of Biblical Inspiration. They have been set forth in the name of Astronomy, Geology, History, Archæology, Philology, Higher Criticism; in fact, in the name of nearly all the branches of human knowledge. Nor have the scholars, who wielded such weapons with real skill and vigor, always been Rationalists whose sole purpose it was to undermine all faith in the Holy Scriptures. Some also have belonged to the ranks of the earnest defenders of Christian Revelation. Indeed, the difficulties urged by the latter have

[1] This Encyclical Letter is dated "the 18th day of November, 1893."

appeared all the stronger, because while their belief in the fact of Biblical Inspiration could not be questioned, their very desire of vindicating it from rationalistic attacks, made them most earnest in showing what they believed to be the necessity of restricting the received doctrine of inspiration within such limits, as would allow it to be best defended against those who deny altogether the inspired character of Holy Writ.

In addition to most of the difficulties just referred to concerning the nature and extent of Biblical Inspiration, Protestants of to-day, who still believe in its existence, have to meet objections of a still more perplexing nature, because telling directly, and to all appearances, conclusively against their proofs in favor of the divine character of the Bible. As they reject the sole satisfactory ground whereon such fundamental belief can solidly rest, viz.: the infallible authority of the Church, they must needs find it a difficult, or rather, as we shall see presently, a hopeless task to establish by conclusive arguments the inspiration of the Old and the New Testaments.

II. Of the many evidences which they have of late set forth in favor of Biblical Inspiration, some have been called *critical*, because they are based exclusively on an examination of the features exhibited by the sacred books themselves.

There is first of all, the argument drawn from their inspiring and elevating character. "The

whole drift of the Bible," writes H. W. Beecher,[1] "is to be a practical book,—a book to teach men the highest way of life. . . . If there ever was a book the aim of whose teaching was that the man of God might be thoroughly furnished unto every good work, that book is the Bible." "As my study of the Bible continues," says another Protestant scholar,[2] "there seems borne in on me the conviction that the Book has a mysterious power of rousing men to grander, nobler lives; that the study of it tends powerfully to deepen the sense of sin and arouse the desire of righteousness. . . . Its words have moved men deeply; it has helped them to be good; it has mastered their wills and gladdened their hearts till the overpowering conviction has forced itself upon them: Never book spake like this Book. Need I point you to the world around, to the miraculous power which is exercised by the Bible, to the evil lives reformed by it, to the noble, beautiful lives daily nourished by it? . . . . You can see the amount of happiness and good that has come to the world even from the miserably imperfect following of it. You can see that the world would be a very paradise of God if it were thoroughly followed. . . . The Book whose tendency is thus to reproduce heaven we may fairly judge to be of heavenly birth. The Book whose beautiful ideals

[1] *Bible Studies*, chap. i, p. 14 (New York, 1893).

[2] Jas. Paterson Smyth, *How God inspired the Bible*, p. 65; p. 37, sq.

no man, no nation, has ever yet attained, is surely not of human growth."

For the purpose of strengthening this argument, other Protestant writers[1] bid us contemplate the importance, number and persistency of the beneficial effects of the Bible upon society at large. And there is no doubt that the thoughtful reader of these "Lectures" will have noticed in nearly every one of them, statements calculated to bring forth and emphasize the elevating and inspiring character of the Sacred Scriptures.[2] There is no doubt too, that the argument itself has been presented in very striking terms by some of the most eloquent Catholic and Protestant speakers and writers of the nineteenth century, and has thus powerfully contributed to confirm the belief in the divine character of the Bible in numerous souls which Rationalistic criticism had caused to waver in their faith. But for all this, it cannot well be denied that this beneficial influence of the Bible upon men, individually and collectively taken, is not so deep, so universal, so necessary as to form a conclusive proof of the inspiration of *all* the Scriptural writings. "Even supposing that such would be the case with the books of the New Testament, the Apocalypse itself included, it seems doubtful whether such a view could

[1] Cfr. for instance, Chas. Elliott, *A Treatise on the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures;* W. F. Farrar, *The Bible, its Meaning and Supremacy;* etc.

[2] See more particularly Lect. V, *Religious Worship in the Bible,* and Lect. VII, *The Bible, a Book of Devotion.*

be held as to all the writings of the Old Covenant, the Canticle of Canticles not excepted. Protestant readers of the Bible are oftentimes shocked by the perusal of the last-named book, and of not a few passages in other books, so that they are far from deriving from them the great spiritual benefit which would lead them to recognize, as it were, the breath of the Spirit of God in those writings. They continue, it is true, to regard them as inspired, but it is *in spite of* such an unfavorable impression, and *because of* a reason very different from the inspiring and elevating character of those parts of the Bible: they were formerly taught to look upon the whole Bible as the Word of God; they admitted this belief on the *authority* of their parents or teachers, and they now wish to persevere in their belief. In point of fact, not so very long ago, Goldwin Smith, in his article entitled "Christianity's Millstone,"[1] simply voiced the sentiment of many no less sceptical but less outspoken Protestant scholars, as to the highly beneficial character of the writings of the Old Testament, when he advocated the giving up of the Old Testament bodily, as a burden too heavy for Christianity to carry."[2]

A second critical argument in favor of the inspiration of the Bible, is based on the superhuman structure and contents of the Old and the New Tes-

[1] This article appeared in the *North American Review*, for Dec., 1895.

[2] *General Introduction to the Holy Scriptures*, by the present writer, p. 521 sq.

taments. The first part of this second argument comes briefly to this. We discover such a wonderful harmony and intimate connection between all the parts of Scripture, as to exclude every "dissent and contradiction," and as to propose the same invariable truth, flowing from the same fountain through different channels. And yet, most of the Biblical writers lived at very different times, in distant places, through the long space of about six thousand years, were men of different education, faculties and occupations, and varied in literary style, manner of illustration, etc., etc. "Had the writers been under no peculiar influence, they would have reasoned and speculated like others, and their writings would have opposed each other. But if they were inspired,—if they all wrote and spoke under the influence of the same Spirit,—then is this harmony accounted for, and it is impossible to account for it upon any other principle. Hence we may conclude that all Scripture is not only genuine and authentic, but divinely inspired."[1]

This reasoning, which has been put forward by several Protestant scholars as a distinct proof of Biblical Inspiration,[2] however much truth it may embody, will not appear either striking or conclusive to minds acquainted with the correct state of the case. First of all, several writers of either Tes-

[1] Thomas H. Horne, *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*, Vol. I, p. 168 (New York, 1856).

[2] Cfr. Chas. Elliott, loc. cit., p. 126 sqq.; and authors quoted there.

tament are not really independent of each other, or at least of a common source. Again, the sacred books do not harmonize so readily and so perfectly as is assumed in the argument. This is the case, for instance, with the first three Gospels, the details of which it has never been an easy matter to harmonize, and the agreement of which, very few of the best scholars would now go the length of regarding as so wonderful as to prove their inspiration. Finally, as admitted by recent Protestant writers, the discrepancies in Biblical History which have been so strongly emphasized in the nineteenth century, are one of the principal causes of the great disquiet which prevails in Protestant communities, regarding the very fact of Scriptural inspiration.[1]

In the second part of the argument,—which is oftener urged as a separate proof from the one just stated,—the inspired character of the Bible is inferred from the divine character of its contents. Those who rely on it implicitly point out as truly divine 1) the contents of Biblical history wherein "everything is looked at in relation to God," wherein also "goodness seems the only thing of importance," while "the sole business of prophet, and historian and lawgiver, seems to be to rebuke men for sin and to incite them to holiness;" 2) "the national hymns and poems of the people, the greatest miracle in the whole of the world's history;" 3) "another peculiarity of the Book: it predicts the future and its

[1] Cfr. J. P. Smyth, *How God inspired the Bible*, p. 4.

predictions are fulfilled. What unaided sage or statesman can do that? 'Who as I,' says God, 'declareth the thing that shall be?'"[1]

It is undoubtedly true that in many ways the Bible appears superior to all other books, and in fact, such we have maintained it to be throughout these "Lectures." Yet it does not seem to us that this superiority would strictly prove its inspiration. The "Godward aspect" of its history, as it is called by the writer just quoted,[2] has its parallel in confessedly uninspired books, or even in ancient Semitic inscriptions, such as the Moabite Stone, where everything also is directly referred to Moab's national God. The sacred hymns of Israel are unquestionably very beautiful lyrical compositions, yet they are not without their counterpart in certain Psalms unquestionably not inspired, which are ascribed to Solomon.[3] Finally, even the predictive element found in the Bible, though unquestionable, when closely examined, is far from furnishing a clear evidence of Biblical Inspiration. Side by side with fulfilled prophecies, there are predictions the accomplishment of which has been, and still is, the matter of very serious controversy. Moreover, it must be borne in mind that a book containing true prophecies, is not on that sole account an inspired book; to be really inspired, a book recording true predic-

[1] J. P. Smyth, *ibid.*, p. 26 sqq. [2] J. P. Smyth, *ibid.*, p. 65.

[3] Cfr. *General Introduction to the Holy Scriptures*, by the present writer, p. 128.

tions, must have been composed in virtue of a divine commission to write, with a positive influence of God upon the writer.

But the critical argument most insisted on, in the present day, as proving the divinely inspired character of both Testaments, is chiefly drawn from the organic unity prevailing through them. "There is in the Bible as a whole," says a well known Protestant writer,[1] "a certain organic unity by which all its parts are bound together around the central figure of Christ. Preparation for Christ by type, prediction, and providential arrangement, manifestly pervades every part of the Old Testament, and the New Testament is as manifestly devoted to an explanation of these features of the Old Testament. Yet, no one can say, that the preparation is of human design or origin, or that the correspondence between the two parts of the Bible and their meeting-point in the person of Christ is the result of deliberate human skill or artifice. It is either a marvellous piece of chance, or else one of the phenomena in which we are compelled to recognize the divine and supernatural element."

Other Protestant scholars have endeavored to strengthen this argument by appealing to the admittedly divine origin of many of the component

[1] T. George Rooke, *Inspiration and other Lectures*, p. 143. See also B. F. Westcott, *The Bible in the Church*, p. 14 sq. (London. 1885).

parts of the Bible, and by presenting it in a manner calculated to produce a deep impression upon religious minds. "But however strikingly this organic unity of the sacred books may be described, it is beyond question that the argument based on it, cannot be considered as a conclusive proof of Biblical Inspiration. On the one hand, it is difficult, not to say impossible, to assign to entire books, such as Esther, Ecclesiastes, etc., a real share in 'the organic unity by which all the parts of the Bible' are said to be 'bound together around the central figure of Christ.' On the other hand, it looks strange, indeed, that such books as those of the Machabees, which seem almost indispensable to the full scheme of Biblical History, and which are recognized as belonging to Holy Writ by the Greek and Latin Churches, should be placed by Protestants outside the list of the Sacred Scriptures. Apparently, the inspired or non-inspired character of the sacred books is independent of their amount of share in the organic unity of the Bible; how then can this organic unity itself be the basis of an argument *for* or *against* their inspiration? . . . Even granting that all the sacred books admitted by Protestants—and those only—were rightly inserted into the list of the Holy Scriptures, a further difficulty remains. This argument cannot be shown to be absolutely conclusive, as long as one can conceive that many Biblical writings may have been the mere natural outcome or development,

under peculiar circumstances, of conceptions already found in pre-existing Jewish literature, and may have been gathered and united to the books already collected, precisely because they were their natural sequel or complement."[1]

Thus then the Critical arguments we have stated and examined, though they can be set forth in a striking manner and thus become very helpful to souls struggling against infidelity, should not be considered as decisive proofs of the divinely inspired character of the Bible. This, in fact, has been so distinctly realized by many Protestants, that desirous of securing solid evidence for this most weighty doctrine, they have fallen back upon what may be called the Catholic ground of *authority*. Like the Catholic scholars and theologians they appeal to the authority of Christ and the Apostles, and even some of them, to the authority of the early Church; but unfortunately, unlike the Catholic apologists, they over-estimate the value of these arguments when they present them as absolute proofs of Biblical Inspiration, irrespective of the Divine Authority of the living Church. It is clear for instance, that every one who recognizes the divine character of Christ must regard as inspired all the books of the Old Testament, because He either quoted them explicitly as the Word of God,[2]

[1] *General Introd. to the Holy Scriptures*, by the present writer, p. 529 sq.

[2] Cfr. Matt. xxii, 31, 43; etc.

or referred to them in general terms, such as "the Scripture," "the Holy Scripture," etc.,[1] the obvious meaning of which at the time was that they had been written under a special divine influence. But it is no less plain that Our Lord's testimony cannot be made to apply to the New Testament writings, none of which was written before His ascension. There is no doubt likewise, that the authority of the Apostles can justly be appealed to in reference to all the books of the Old Testament, since they spoke of those sacred writings in exactly the same terms as their divine Master, and unquestionably shared the belief of their Jewish contemporaries in the inspiration of all their contents. Yea more, one readily sees how in regard to the books of the New Testament which were written by the Apostles, an argument may be drawn in favor of their inspiration, from the promise of special divine help made to them by Christ for their *oral* preaching.[2] This special divine guidance would appear more needed for their *written* preaching than for their preaching by word of mouth, because destined to shape the faith of the Church in all future ages; and further, the manner in which St. Peter speaks of the Epistles of St. Paul generally, placing them on the same level as the other divine Scriptures,[3] seems to prove that writings known to have been com-

[1] Cfr. Matt. xiv, 49; Luke xxiv, 44 sq.; John xvii, 12; etc.
[2] Cfr. Matt. x, 19, 20; John xiv, 26; xvi, 13, 14.
[3] II Petr. iii, 15, 16.

posed by the Apostles were at once held as inspired. But plainly, even this manner of reasoning would not establish the inspiration of the book of the Acts, of our second and third Gospels, which were not composed by Apostles; while it would leave in doubt that of the Epistle to the Hebrews,—not to speak of other writings of the New Testament,—since its apostolic authorship has ever been a matter of serious discussion.

In view of the foregoing remarks, it is easy to understand how some Protestant writers fall back on the authority of the early Church to confirm and complete the preceding argument. But in doing so, they 1) manifestly ignore the leading principle of Protestantism, viz.: the rejection of all ecclesiastical tradition; 2) show themselves inconsistent, since they do not receive all the books of the Old Testament found in the Catholic Bible, although the same early Church recognized them all as inspired; and above all, 3) seem to make their belief in Biblical inspiration rest,—at least in connection with several books of the New Testament—on the mere human, and consequently fallible, testimony of the early Church.

While even the best arguments exclusively relied on by Protestants to prove the inspired character of the Sacred Scriptures are clearly inconclusive, the old and distinctly Catholic argument in its favor, is as convincing as it is simple. It starts from the fact that "the Church of God is the

pillar and ground of the truth,"[1] the living "body of Christ,"[2] "led by the Holy Spirit into all the truth,"[3] having the positive mission to "teach all nations even to the consummation of the world,"[4] and to do so with the same authority as Christ Himself: "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you;"[5] "He that heareth you, heareth Me."[6] Whoever then listens to the voice of the Church proclaiming the inspired character of the Bible, as a truth revealed by God, listens to the very voice of Christ still resounding in the Church's teaching, and has consequently a truly divine, infallible and absolutely satisfactory ground for his belief in Biblical Inspiration. Let therefore difficulties be raised in the name of all the human sciences, let them be urged with skill and vigor by the best-equipped scholars, they cannot prevail against this article of the Christian faith, in the minds of intelligent and docile Catholics. They have always at hand an irresistible ground for their belief on this point, in the simple consideration that the divinely inspired character of the Scripture is certain beyond doubt, since the Church speaking with divine, and consequently infallible authority, teaches it as a truth revealed by God.

But this divine authority of the living Church is not only an absolutely satisfactory ground in

[1] I Tim. iii, 15. [2] Ephesians i, 23; Colossians i, 28; etc.
[3] John xvi, 13; Acts xv, 28. [4] Matt. xxviii, 19, 20.
[5] John xx, 21. [6] Luke x, 16.

favor of Biblical Inspiration, it is really the sole adequate proof that can be given of it. The reason of this is plain. As the inspiration of the sacred books is a divine operation not necessarily known even to the mind that is acted upon by the Holy Spirit, it necessarily follows that the testimony of God Himself is required to make men perfectly sure of its existence: but this divine testimony comes to their knowledge, and is the absolutely ground of their faith, only by the voice of that infallible and living Church which He has commanded us to hear.[1] Nor is this view of the case, one which has been taken by Catholic scholars, in modern times, and for the purpose of controversy with Protestants, it goes as far back, at least, as St. Augustine, who, in one of his treatises,[2] writes these significant words: "I would not believe the Gospel, unless the authority of the Church moved me thereto."

Finally, this doctrine is not only thoroughly consistent with the rest of Catholic belief, it is also in perfect harmony with God's wisdom and providence in supplying all His children, learned and unlearned, with an easy and reliable ground of firm faith in the inspired character of His written word.

III. The superiority which we have just pointed out for the position of Catholics over that of Prot-

[1] For developments on this point, see Card. Wiseman, *Principal Doctrines and Practices of the Catholic Church*, Lect. ii.

[2] *Contra Epistolam Fundamenti*, chap. v (Migne, *Latin Patrology*, vol. 42, col. 176).

estants in regard to the Proofs of Biblical Inspiration exists also in a remarkable degree in connection with its Nature and Extent. While, as we shall see presently, Catholics are at one on the most important points concerning these two general questions, Protestants are hopelessly divided in reference to them. Thus we find among the latter some of their ablest writers still maintaining the old *Confessional* theory, or *Mechanical* or *Dictation* theory of inspiration, which regards the sacred writers as hardly more than machines writing infallibly what was suggested to them by the Holy Spirit; while others, no less able, but better informed,[1] hold what may be called the theory of *Natural* inspiration, which admits that there are errors of detail in the Sacred Books, and that strictly speaking, their authors should not be called inspired, except in the sense in which Milton, Shakespeare, Homer, Plato, Virgil, etc., can be looked upon as inspired. Others again propound what is sometimes termed the theory of *General* inspiration, because it identifies the inspiration of Holy Writ and the illumination common to every believer;[2] while others adopt a *Partial* inspiration theory, which limits inspiration to certain parts of the Bible, (either to the doctrine, or to special reve-

[1] Kuenen in Holland, Ewald in Germany, F. W. Newman in England, Theodore Parker in America, etc., may be ranked among them.

[2] This is, in substance, the theory endorsed by Schleiermacher, Neander, Farrar, Maurice, etc.

lations, or to things naturally unknown to the writer), and the watchword of which is "the Bible *contains* the Word of God," as against the formula "the Bible *is* the Word of God."[1] Finally, there is the opinion,—most varied in its actual forms,—which has been called the *Illumination* theory. It maintains that the Bible is not equally inspired in all its parts, and that in connection with the lower degrees of illumination or guidance granted to the various writers there is ample room for imperfection and error in our Sacred Books.

Instead of the perplexing variety of Protestant views, which may be more or less easily brought under one or other of these leading theories of Biblical Inspiration, and which clearly show that Protestants agree among themselves upon little more than calling "inspired" the Sacred Books contained in their Bible, Catholics are practically at one in regard to most of the important points which concern the nature and extent of Inspiration. Thus, in reference to its nature they abide by the common teaching of the Church, which may be briefly stated, as follows: First of all, the inspiration of the sacred writings makes of them all truly the work of God. They have the Holy Ghost for their principal author, and consequently do not simply con-

[1] This view, held by Paley, Horne, etc., was declared in 1863 by the British Privy Council as sufficiently in harmony with the 39 Articles of the Church of England.

tain the word of God, but are in a true sense the word of God. They convey the divine message precisely in the manner in which the Almighty willed it to be transmitted to men, and on that account Catholic writers and preachers, treading in the footsteps of the ancient Church Fathers, as well as of Our Lord and His apostles, regard and cite as God's the words of Holy Writ.

In the second place, the inspiration of the Bible does not exclude a certain human authorship, viz.: that of the individual writers by means of whom its various books were composed. In so far as these selected men wrote under the special influence of divine inspiration they were truly co-agents with the Holy Ghost in the composition of the sacred writings; and this is why the words of Scripture are also quoted as their words, as the words of Isaias, of Jeremias, of St. John, of St. Paul, etc., as the case may be.

In the third place, "Inspiration, in the special and technical sense, includes the three following operations of the Holy Ghost upon the sacred writers: 1) the impulse to put in writing the matter in which God wills they should record; 2) the suggestion of the matter to be written, whether by revelation of truths not previously known, or only by the prompting of those things which were within the writer's knowledge; 3) the assistance which excludes liability to error in writing all things what-

ever may be suggested to them by the Spirit of God to be written."[1]

Lastly, "as regards man's share in the production of the sacred writings Catholic scholars generally bid us to remember that though acting as co-agents under God's special influence, the inspired writers were not mere passive instruments, but bore themselves under the divine action as truly intelligent, active and free agents. This they infer particularly from the words by which the author of the second book of Machabees confesses that 'in undertaking his work of abridging (the five books of Jason of Cyrene) he has taken in hand no easy task, yea, a business full of watching and sweat . . . . and has, according to the plan proposed, studied to be brief;'[2] and also from the statement of St. Luke in his Prologue, where he says that he has investigated with great care all the matters he is about to write down.[3] From these same passages and numberless others in Holy Writ Catholic theologians conclude likewise that the sacred writers may have been unconscious of the fact of their inspiration, and that, as they may have committed to writing things which they already knew, so they

[1] Card. Manning, *The Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost*, p. 161 (3d edit.). See also Encyclical Letter of Leo XIII on the *Study of Holy Scripture*, p. 40 (English Trans., Press of Mt. Loretto, Staten Island, New York, 1894).

[2] II Machab. ii, 27. See also verse 24.

[3] Luke i, 3.

may have also embodied in their books pre-existing documents." [1]

Such are the principal positions concerning the nature of Biblical Inspiration, which Catholic scholars generally agree in admitting, and which, on that account, may be said to contain the common teaching of the Church. They set forth a very distinct notion of the manner in which God's special influence and man's intelligent action combined to produce the Sacred Scriptures, and moreover tally perfectly with what may be considered as the tradition of Christian ages.

Side by side with these well-nigh universally accepted positions, there are theories regarding the nature of inspiration, which, because correct from the standpoint of Catholic orthodoxy, have won the acceptance of many minds. In their several degrees of probability, they have been or are still freely debated in the Church, and as such deserve a passing notice.

The first, which has been held by many Fathers and ecclesiastical writers,[2] looks upon the human authors of the sacred writings as mere amanuenses of the Holy Spirit. It likens God's action to a *dictation*, which men divinely selected for the pur-

[1] *General Introduction to the Holy Scriptures*, by the present writer, p. 546. See also Card. Newman, *On the Inspiration of Scripture*, in the *Nineteenth Century*, February, 1894, p. 195; Vigouroux, *Manuel Biblique*, Vol. I, no. 22 sq.; etc.

[2] For details, Cfr. my *General Introd. to the Holy Scriptures*, chap. xx, "History of the Doctrine of Biblical Inspiration."

pose, simply set down in writing, and thus explains how the inspired books have truly God for their Author. This theory of *verbal* inspiration, as it is called, is unquestionably orthodox, inasmuch as it is in real harmony with the authoritative teaching of the Church. Yet, it can hardly be considered as enjoying much probability. It seems to detract too much from the share of the human co-agents in the composition of the inspired books, by reducing it to little more than the mechanical act of writing. Most Fathers and ecclesiastical writers have ascribed a greater share than that to the human writers of Scripture, and the individual peculiarities of style, diction, thought, manner of treatment, noticeable in the sacred writings, together with their many discrepancies in the details recorded, render it very probable that what is known under the name of the *human element* of the Holy Scriptures, is much greater than this "mechanical theory" of Biblical Inspiration is willing to concede.

Much more probable indeed, because more in agreement with the facts of the case, is a second orthodox theory, also called a *verbal* inspiration theory. It maintains that the sacred writer is an active and free agent in the composition of an inspired book, selecting himself and according to his literary ability, purpose, information, etc., the words which he puts down, though all the time he is under the special divine influence which is called inspiration. In this manner, due allowance is made for

the peculiarities as regards the matter and form of the various books or parts of books of Scripture, while the selection and use of their words and expressions are not withdrawn from the influence of the Holy Spirit. This second theory does not therefore liken divine inspiration to an outward and human action, such as that of a master or a King dictating to his amanuensis, and thereby curtailing the latter's free use of his mental powers. It rather likens it to the inner and truly divine operation of grace which reaches man's words, deeds and purposes, without doing away in the least with the free exercise of his various faculties. In so far then as it "compares," so to speak, "spiritual things with spiritual,"[1] it seems to supply us with a deeper conception of Biblical Inspiration. Besides, it has the great advantage of harmonizing all the leading data concerning this difficult question, such as 1) the many and important differences in wording, representation, etc., noticeable in the sacred records; 2) the description of Scriptural Inspiration solemnly set forth by Leo XIII in his Encyclical on the Study of Holy Scripture, and implying that the divine assistance guided the inspired writers from the beginning to the end of their respective work;[2] 3) the expressions of the ecumenical Council of the Vatican: "the sacred books of the Old and the New Testaments were composed (literally: *co-written*) by

[1] I Corinth. ii, 13.

[2] Cfr. Official English Translation, p. 40.

the inspiration of the Holy Ghost,"[1] which naturally suggest that the selection and use of the primitive words of the inspired records, were not made independently of, but rather conjointly with, the divine action. It is not therefore surprising to find that this second theory has been steadily gaining ground among Catholic scholars and writers.

The last conception of the nature of Biblical Inspiration to be mentioned among those that have not won universal acceptance, allows much more scope than either of the preceding theories, for the individual action of the sacred writers in the composition of Holy Writ. It bears chiefly on those things which were within the writer's personal knowledge, and maintains that in reference to them, the divine action may have been limited to an impulse to write on a topic suggested, and to a general indication of the things already known, which the Holy Ghost wished to enter into the composition of a book. It affirms that the divine authorship may be claimed for a work thus written, in about the same manner as the authorship of several Papal documents composed in like fashion, is ascribed by everybody to the Sovereign Pontiff who promulgated them. There is no doubt that this view, which has been named a *Limited Illumination* theory, may in the abstract appear sufficient to meet the requirements of the definitions of the Church concerning inspiration,

[1] Conc. Vatic., Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Filius*, chap. ii.

inasmuch as a book composed after this manner, might strictly be called "the Work of God." It seems, however, that when considered in the concrete, a work thus written would hardly have been composed under the divine special influence which Christian tradition of past ages has called inspiration, and which Leo XIII has described in his Encyclical on the Study of the Holy Scripture, in the following terms: "By supernatual power, He (the Holy Ghost) so moved and impelled them (the human authors) to write—He was so present to them—that the things which He ordered, and those only, they first, rightly understood, then they willed faithfully to write down, and finally expressed in apt words and with infallible truth. Otherwise, it could not be said that He was the Author of the entire Scripture." [1]

When we pass from the question of the nature of Biblical Inspiration to that of its extent, we likewise find that on many points, Catholic scholars are thoroughly at one. All grant, for instance, that the grammatical inaccuracies or other defects of style and composition noticeable in the primitive text of the sacred books, should not be reckoned among the objects to which divine inspiration is directly extended: all such defects are immediately referable not to the divine action, but to imperfections in the literary training, mastery of language, etc., of the human co-agents with God in the

[1] Encyclical Letter, p. 40 (Engl. Transl.).

composition of the inspired writings. A second position common among contemporary Catholic scholars, is to the effect that divine inspiration extends to matters other than faith and morals. This is an obvious inference from the dogmatic formula: "The sacred books of both Testaments have God for their author," and has the further support of the testimony of Our Lord and the New Testament writers, who quote indiscriminately as God's Word, passages which have a bearing on faith and morals, and those that have not. In the third place, as regards those matters not appertaining to faith and morals, which should be considered as reached by divine inspiration, Catholic theologians admit, generally, that they include "all the things and sentences written by the author."[1] A clear proof of this is found in the fact, that whatever things and statements may be shown to have been added to the primitive text by any one beside an inspired writer, are at once considered as merely man's word; whereas, whatever may be proved to have belonged primitively to the sacred text, is regarded at once, wherever found, as truly the Word of God. A fourth position admitted by all Catholic scholars, is that divine inspiration so extends to all the contents of Holy Writ as to exclude from it every positive and formal error. This they hold chiefly on the ground of the tradition of the Church, which, as well remarked by one of our

[1] Cfr. Pesch, S. J.; A. Tanquerey, S. S.; Chauvin; etc.

leading Catholic writers, "never looked upon the Bible as a mosaic made up of erroneous human statements set side by side with statements true and divine. Whoever starts from the data supplied by tradition must admit that there is no room for error in Holy Writ."[1] And it is precisely this ground that Pope Leo XIII has set forth in his memorable Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* on the Study of Holy Scripture, where, after having stated that "so far is it from being possible that any error can co-exist with inspiration, that inspiration not only is incompatible with error, but excludes and rejects it as absolutely and necessarily as it is impossible that God Himself, the Supreme Truth, be the author of any error whatever," the Sovereign Pontiff adds: "This is the ancient and unchanging faith of the Church."[2]

"But while thus excluding every positive and formal error from the genuine passages of the sacred writings, Catholic scholars[3] do not intend to affirm that divine inspiration makes them all to be true in exactly the same manner. Most statements of Holy Writ must, of course, be taken as expressing a plain objective fact, and consequently as containing an absolute truth. This is clearly the case with such statements as: God created heaven and earth; Jesus suffered and died for our sins, etc. But there are

[1] A. Loisy, *La Question Biblique et l'Inspiration des Ecritures*, p. 4. [2] *Encyclical Letter*, p. 39 (Official Engl. Transl.)

[3] Cfr. Vigouroux; Pesch; Tanquerey; Chauvin; etc

other statements in the Bible, such, for instance, as refer to purely scientific matters (that the earth is immovable; that the sun rises and sets, etc.), which, on the one hand, cannot be regarded in exactly the same light as those referred to above, since they do not contain the expression of something absolutely true; and which, on the other hand, should not be set down simply as erroneous, because they are part and parcel of inspired writings, that is of books from which every positive and formal error must be excluded. Whence a last position common to all Catholic writers, that in certain biblical statements, not absolute, but simply relative truth may be admitted. That this last position is not an evasion invented to escape the difficulties recently raised in the name of science against the truth of the Scriptural records, is plain from the fact that such an ancient theologian as St. Thomas († 1274) practically held it, when he wrote: 'Moses had to deal with an uncultured people to whose untutored mind he accommodated his language, by describing things to them simply as they appeared to the senses.'[1] In fact, as early as the time of St. Augustine († 430), it was clearly seen that statements referring to purely scientific matters should not be taken as expressing absolute truth, because, as this holy Doctor says: 'the Holy Ghost, who spoke by them (the inspired writers), did not intend to teach men these things,

[1] *Summa Theologica*, Part I, quest. lxx, art. i. (ad 3um).

which were in no way profitable to salvation.'[1] It is not, therefore, surprising to find that in his Encyclical on the Study of Holy Scripture, which embodies so well the tradition of Catholic ages, Pope Leo XIII draws the following conclusion: 'Hence they (the inspired writers) did not seek to penetrate the secrets of nature, but rather described and dealt with things in more or less figurative language, or in terms which were commonly used at the time, and which, in many instances, are in daily use at this day, even by the most eminent men of science. Ordinary speech primarily and properly describes what comes under the senses; and somewhat in the same way the sacred writers—as the angelic Doctor reminds us—went by what sensibly appeared, or put down what God speaking to men, signified, in the way men could understand and were accustomed to.'[2]

"Thus then, according to the position of Catholic scholars, an erroneous impression might be gathered from certain statements of the sacred writers, as, for instance, from the unscientific descriptions of natural phenomena. But the erroneous impression may, and should be set aside by treating the popular language under their pens as we treat similar language on the lips of even the best informed men of science. It describes external phenomena without reference to their true nature, and describes them

[1] *De Genesi ad Litteram*, Book II, chap. ix, n. 20.
[2] *Encyclical Letter*, p. 36 sq.

accurately as they appear. In a word, it contains not absolute, but only relative truth." [1]

It is plain, therefore, that the points of agreement among Catholic writers in regard to the extent of the divine action which is called Biblical inspiration, are both numerous and important. They constitute a compact body of practically-fixed doctrines when contrasted with the countless and shifting views which are spread among Protestants, and which cause so much disquiet among them at the present day. In fact, the only questions concerning which Catholic scholars are still at variance bear on the manner and extent in which relatively true statements should be admitted in Scripture. The difference of views existing among them comes briefly to this: while many admit that relativeness of truth should be limited to a comparatively few passages of the Bible, which refer to purely scientific matters; others,—in a goodly and increasing number,—would extend it much farther, viz.: to all scientific matters and to many historical statements which have no direct or necessary connection with faith and morals. Yea, more, the brunt of the discussion truly bears on the question last mentioned: whether relative truths should be admited in purely historical statements.

Into this abstruse question we do not feel called upon to enter in a popular essay such as the present

[1] *General Introduction to the Holy Scriptures*, by the present writer, p. 55 sqq.

Lecture.[1] Suffice it to say that the Catholic writers who deem it necessary to answer it in the affirmative wish to have two things distinctly understood. First and foremost, in admitting relatively true statements in reference to purely historical matters they "have not the remotest intention of saying that the sacred writers have erred or were liable to err in things even unimportant and accidental."[2] Secondly, their opinion that purely historical statements found in Holy Writ may be treated in about the same manner as some of its scientific statements, seems to them the one practically endorsed by Leo XIII in his Encyclical on the Study of Holy Scripture, for having adopted and approved the view that the language of the sacred writers may be taken as not conveying the strict scientific truth, the Sovereign Pontiff adds a little later: "The principles here laid down will apply to cognate sciences, and especially to history."[3]

In bringing to a close this last of the "Biblical Lectures," we wish to call once more the attention of the reader to the great superiority of the Catholic, over the Protestant, position in regard to the most important feature of the Bible,—its Inspiration. However strikingly the arguments drawn by Prot-

[1] For detailed information Cfr. my *General Introduction to the Holy Scriptures*, pp. 512 sqq.; 556 sqq.; etc.

[2] Paul Schanz, *A Christian Apology*, vol. ii, p. 434 (Eng. Transl., 1896).

[3] Encyclical Letter, p. 38 (Official Eng. Transl.)

estants from the Bible itself to establish its divinely inspired character may be presented, and thus help to confirm the faith of wavering souls, only the distinctly Catholic ground based upon the Divine Authority of a Living Church can supply an adequate proof of Biblical inspiration. Whoever views the inspiration of Sacred Scripture as a divine, and consequently mysterious, operation, not necessarily known even to the mind that is acted upon, must needs hold that the testimony of God Himself can alone make us perfectly sure of it; and since this divine testimony comes to our knowledge only by the voice of the Church which He has commanded us to hear, it necessarily follows that only the infallible teaching of the same living Church, is the absolute satisfactory ground for our belief in this vital truth of the Christian faith.

In regard to the nature and extent of Biblical Inspiration, the superiority of the Catholic, over the Protestant, position, is hardly less conspicuous As we pointed out in the course of this Lecture, the common teaching of the Church concerning these two great questions, embodies clear and definite points of doctrine, which one would seek in vain in the Protestant theories of Inspiration. Only in the Catholic conception of Biblical inspiration do we find that accurate and distinct description of the divine and the human elements of Holy Writ, which encroaches on the share of neither God nor man, in the production of a divinely inspired book. Only

in the Catholic teaching which excludes every positive and formal error from the statements of the Bible, while it admits relativeness of truth in a certain number of them, do we find a vivid realization of the God of truth, Who because He speaks in the Holy Scriptures to man's weak and limited mind, acts as a father who accommodates his superior knowledge to the manner of thought of his little children.

Finally, when we bear in mind that this accommodation of God's language to our weakness, which is being more and more emphasized in the Church's teaching, goes back, together with her constant belief in the veracity of Holy Writ, not only to the Middle Ages, when it was inculcated by St. Thomas († 1274), but even to the time of St. Augustine († 430) and St. Jerome († 420), we cannot help feeling that the visible head of the Church who proclaimed it of late,[1] is indeed that "scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven," whom the Gospel "likens to a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure new things and old." (Matt. xiii, 52.)

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[1] The Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, on the Study of Holy Scripture, in which this teaching is inculcated for the first time, appeared in Nov., 1893.

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